

Update on Two Lands Acts

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Lands takes its responsibility to administer and manage public lands in the Northwest Territories seriously. That is why over the summer, the Department engaged with Indigenous governments, stakeholders and the public on potential changes to the *Northwest Territories Lands Act* and the *Commissioner's Land Act*. This input will, for the first time, allow for a made-in-the-North approach to managing land in the Northwest Territories.

Since Devolution, administration of public lands in the Northwest Territories has fallen under two separate acts: the *Northwest Territories Lands Act* and the *Commissioner's Land Act*. These two Acts were developed independently of one another, one by the federal government and one by the Government of the Northwest Territories. With Devolution, both Lands Acts became the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and our government made it a mandate commitment to improve how they work together to advance our vision of land and resource management.

Mr. Speaker, our work has focused on building from the foundations that these two pieces of legislation provided. As a first step, the Department of Lands developed an engagement paper on the two Acts. The paper was used to facilitate discussion around potential administrative and technical changes that could provide better system alignment where appropriate, and improve consistency and clarity for the public land users. This was a key tool for jump-starting the conversation about the kinds of changes that might be needed to the two Acts.

With this engagement tool, the Department got to work reaching out to Indigenous governments, stakeholders and the public through open houses in regional centres, presentations to interested groups and online feedback gathered through the Department's website. This feedback will be reflected in a report that will be shared with Members and made available to the public in October. The report will be placed on the Department's website and sent out to those who participated in the engagement. Afterwards, we will follow the legislative process to begin developing legislation later this fall.

Making revisions to our lands Acts is one step towards meeting our shared land and resource management goals and will not end with the development of new legislation. We will continue to take a collaborative approach to implement the legislative, regulatory, and policy systems. As our Territory continues to change and evolve over time; we need to ensure our legislation isn't left behind.

Mr. Speaker, these efforts to improve legislation, policies and systems will help us to achieve our greatest objective, to create more certainty for land users throughout the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.