

**Mandatory Entry Level Training for Commercial Truck Drivers**

Mr. Speaker, the trucking sector is an important industry in the Northwest Territories. Our communities and residents rely on this sector to deliver essential supplies to northern communities every day. At the same time, the health and safety of NWT residents is a top priority of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We must consider policies that will make our transportation system safer for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, following the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy in Saskatchewan in 2018, there have been renewed calls for mandatory training for commercial drivers in Canada. All jurisdictions in Canada, the federal government, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, and the Canadian Transportation Agency have agreed that new national safety standards in entry level training are critical for the continued sustainability and advancement of the industry. That is why in late January, the GNWT implemented mandatory minimum training requirements for commercial truck drivers applying for a Class 1 licence for the first time. This training will enhance safety for drivers and the public, and align the NWT with other jurisdictions in Canada who have implemented entry level training for Class 1 drivers.

In January of 2019, public engagement sessions were held with industry, stakeholders, and the public on this important issue. Our government received feedback regarding its implementation and how the program might be designed to best meet the needs of Northerners while remaining consistent with similar programs in other jurisdictions.

Targeted stakeholder engagement was held in October of 2021 with NWT driving schools and trucking companies. The purpose of this engagement was to share information about

progress being made to implement entry level training, gather feedback, and answer questions. These engagement sessions showed there is strong public support for mandatory entry level training for Class 1 drivers in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this new mandatory training will consist of class curriculum, in-cab training and in-yard training, and Northwest Territories residents will be able to get that training in the North. The GNWT is working with driving schools interested in seeking approval to become training providers in the territory. Entry level training is available and being offered by Aurora College at this time.

With mandatory entry level training now a reality in the Northwest Territories, I am confident this program will provide first-time commercial truck drivers with a solid foundation upon which to develop the safe driving skills and practices they need to work safely. It will also enhance safety on NWT roads and in NWT communities.

Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.