

What We Heard and Next Steps – Creation of the Mineral Resources Act

Mr. Speaker, our government committed to providing support for mineral exploration and the mining sector, and to support the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. The proposed Mineral Resources Act will be landmark, made-in-the-North legislation for our territory, and we are investing in its drafting with this degree of importance.

As we work to develop what will be the NWT's first-ever homegrown mining legislation, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has completed its most extensive public engagement since Devolution.

The extent of our public engagement and the themes that emerged from it are highlighted in the What We Heard Report released last month in association with our government's work and investment in the AME Roundup.

Our 120-day public engagement period closed on December 1st last year. In total, the Department received 516 oral and written submissions from NWT residents, Indigenous governments and organizations, industry, NGOs, and stakeholders.

Three hundred and twenty eight people participated in one-on-one engagement sessions that took place in Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Behchokò and Yellowknife.

ITI's engagement portal received over 2,700 visits. While the broad public engagement period is now closed, a second round of targeted follow up meetings

are now being held with key stakeholders, and close to 200 people, subscribed to the project's newsletter, will continue to be informed of progress on this file.

As we advance through the drafting process, we will also continue to meet and work with the Inter-Governmental Council and reach out to key stakeholders and subject matter experts to ensure our bill is the best product possible and will meet the needs of NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, our engagement has sparked a great deal of discussion around royalties. It is undoubtedly one of many whole-of-government discussions we need to have as we take ownership and responsibility for our future post Devolution.

Royalties directly impact the profitability, and viability, of resource development projects in the NWT. While we must get the best deal possible for NWT residents, we must also remember that we are almost-wholly reliant on these projects to protect the economic environment that we already have.

Capturing the economic benefit of resource development for the people of the Northwest Territories is a serious matter, but we will not be reviewing our resource royalty regime as part of our work on this proposed Act.

I can assure Members that we will have the discussion, and when we do, it will be in the context of a broad fiscal review that includes and considers our existing taxes and other revenue collection methods related to the mining sector.

Mr. Speaker, what we heard during public engagement, along with a consideration of key elements, the results of our scoping exercise, cross-jurisdictional reviews, and policy research, will now guide and inform the development of the new Mineral Resources Act.

I look forward to working with Members of this Legislative Assembly as this process continues to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.