

**Climate Change**

Mr. Speaker, our environment is changing rapidly. Average temperatures in the territory are rising up to four times faster than the rest of the world. Coastal erosion is already affecting communities, and melting permafrost is impacting infrastructure. We know that ice-free summers in the Arctic will become a reality in the future, and ice jams have caused large-scale flooding events in the NWT two years in a row. There are many factors that contribute to ice jam flooding, and climate change is affecting each of these factors in different ways. We will continue to see flood events in the future, and it is possible that they will occur more frequently, or become more destructive with the effects of climate change.

Climate change is real and action is needed now. I am proud to say that our government is taking action.

Ninety two percent of funded action items in the NWT Climate Change 2019-2023 Action Plan are on track to being fully addressed by 2023. Last year alone we invested \$55.6 million to implement actions from the Climate Change Action Plan and the Energy Action Plan. We are working to make communities more resilient to the changing climate by investing in research projects to understand how our environment is changing, as we find ways to respond and adapt to those changes.

But it takes more than money to make real change.

Addressing the climate crisis requires us to work together. I am happy to hear of the great work the NWT Climate Change Council has been doing to provide guidance to our government. The Council brings together staff from Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, NWT communities, Elders, environmental organizations and industry

stakeholders. We are working with our partners on key climate change adaptation initiatives including risk and opportunity assessments, and community hazard mapping to identify the key adaptation risks we are facing. This will allow us to focus our resources on priorities that make the biggest difference.

The Council provides an opportunity to continue to build and strengthen relationships, shared understanding, and trust. We are supporting the Climate Change Council to establish a youth advisory group, and I am excited to hear the perspectives and ideas of the next generation of northern leaders. We are listening to and working with people who feel the effects of the changing climate every day.

We have heard the need for better access to information on climate change and will be engaging the Council at the next meeting on a draft Climate Change Outreach Plan.

We are working toward transformative projects. Projects that, with the right federal investments, and the hard work of Northerners, will deliver results for the North.

For example, NWT communities need energy that is secure and affordable as well as sustainable. We are working on alternatives and made-in-the-North solutions that can meet all of these needs.

We have a new Climate Scientist and Hydrological Modeler who is working to assess how water levels have changed over time and how they are projected to change in the future. GNWT scientists are also working with the federal government to review and update existing floodplain mapping information in flood-prone communities.

We are incorporating climate change considerations into public safety and community operations planning. In addition, we have developed a high-level climate change vulnerability assessment on the impacts to public and community infrastructure within all NWT communities. Proposed adaptation measures and recommendations for future work have been identified for all NWT communities.

We are the first, and currently the only jurisdiction in Canada, to establish a Climate Change Archaeologist position to assess climate change impacts on archaeological sites and other places of cultural significance in the territory.

But we cannot do it alone. Climate change is multifaceted, and the response must be too. We are working with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, communities, industry, non-government organizations and others to find solutions that work to prepare this territory and its residents for the future.

The climate crisis is real. It is frightening and can even seem overwhelming. But together, we can adapt and respond proactively. Together we will continue to rise to the challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.