

**Collaborating on Benefit Retention Opportunities and Approaches**

The Government of the Northwest Territories has a responsibility to ensure benefits from the extraction of NWT natural resources are provided to residents of the NWT.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has three initiatives that are advancing the priority set by the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to advance a benefit retention approach to economic development in the NWT.

I would like to offer Members an update of this work. This month, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment launched a pilot program that will fund capacity building initiatives for Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations ready to take on a greater role in the NWT resource sector.

Early comprehensive and coordinated engagement between Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations and industry is key to advancing mineral exploration and development in a responsible and timely manner. These engagements set the stage for positive relationships that help to create certainty and economic and environmental sustainability.

Community leaders have long identified the need to participate from the beginning, in mineral exploration and development projects. Funding from the Indigenous Capacity Building Program will help position them to do this.

It will provide support for strategic planning and capacity building activities like workshops and meetings, training, educational opportunities, and the participation and attendance of individuals at industry conferences and tradeshows.

It will position Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, specifically, to benefit from activity and investment in our resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, our territory holds a competitive edge in its Environment, Social and Governance, or ESG, performance approach to mining. It is rooted in the NWT's co-management regulatory system and the collaborative model for resource development that has emerged among our mines, Indigenous governments, and communities in the form of Socio-Economic Agreements or SEAs.

This system established a new way of doing business in the NWT and have helped to create jobs and training opportunities for residents. They have resulted in the success of dozens of northern and Indigenous-owned companies, development corporations and joint ventures. But Madam Speaker, even these partnerships can be improved on.

As part of its work on this mandate priority, ITI commissioned a reviewed of its 30-year history with SEAs to evaluate the GNWT's overall approach and the extent to which they have, or can continue to, generate benefits for NWT residents.

The department will be releasing this review in the coming month. Moreover, it will be convening a single forum in December to address the review's recommendations and next steps directly with Indigenous governments, industry proponents and GNWT representatives who have worked to date to implement these Agreements.

Madam Speaker, the third initiative promised by our government to support this mandate commitment was a review of the NWT's royalty regime.

We are advancing this review as part of the Intergovernmental Council of the Northwest Territories and guided by our collaboration protocol on legislation, regulation and policy development.

The protocol is the first agreement of its kind in Canada. Consistent with the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management, it respects the jurisdictions and authorities of Indigenous governments and the GNWT while also providing a mechanism for collaboration and consensus-building.

More importantly, the protocol is now being put into practice. The regulatory framework for the Northwest Territory's first stand-alone Mineral Resources Act is currently being developed according to the protocol and the review of the NWT's resource royalty regime is one part of this historic work.

Between February and July, engagements with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, industry, elected officials and the public centred on whether participants felt the NWT's existing regulations permit a fair share of royalties to be returned to the NWT; that they are contributing to a stable and competitive investment environment; and that royalty regulations are being fully maximized.

What we learned in these conversations is being compiled in a What We Heard Report that will be released by the end of this year.

Ultimately, the input received will be combined with what is learned from financial modelling and other research and analysis to inform recommendations for the development of royalty regulations in support of the Mineral Resource Act.

Madam Speaker, directly and indirectly the three initiatives that I have highlighted today will improve our government's approach to benefit-retention.

Perhaps, more importantly, they are a demonstration of our government's continued commitment to work with Indigenous governments and communities in the pursuit of opportunities for economic investment and growth.

The NWT has the opportunity to not only realize incredible success from resource development but has a path by which to do business better. This path includes high ESG value and long-term project certainty.

With these benefits, we come full circle, because the very investments we are making to support stronger relationships with Indigenous governments and Indigenous government organizations will bring greater value to the projects themselves and, therefore, greater value for our partners, industries, and territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.