

Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods

Madam Speaker, this government works to support Northerners who want to get out on the land and participate in traditional activities as part of sustainable livelihoods.

Since marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in September, I have thought about our efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods and support residents of the NWT and the mandate commitments of this government all serve to create a critical mass that builds bridges and strengthens partnerships.

Northerners, and particularly Indigenous peoples, have important connections to the land, water, forests and wildlife, which have supported culture, traditions, knowledge and ways of life for generations.

Today, I would like to share some of our collaborative efforts with communities, Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations and other co-management partners to support sustainable livelihoods in the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources supports a wide range of programs that promote on-the-land activities, country food harvesting, and the traditional economy.

The Take a Family on the Land Program provides funding to help people take part in on-the-land activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, and sharing Indigenous knowledge. This new program is designed to be accessible for diverse families. The first year of the program was very well received, with 29 applications funded. This winter the program will be providing \$75,000 to applicants from across the territory.

Recently, the department expanded its Hunter Education Program to provide a new credit course for high school students. ENR worked closely with the Department of Education,

Culture and Employment to develop and pilot the new course in nine schools earlier this year. Both departments are pleased to announce that the course is now available across the NWT and will help students connect with and learn from local harvesters.

A new kind of program was developed to help support land-based healing by learning traditional trapping skills. This past February, ENR worked with the Department of Justice to offer a pilot in trapper training at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

The pilot was so successful that it has been offered as a regular program as of June 2022. The department is also looking for opportunities to provide equipment and support to participants so they can continue trapping after release. This is more than just a one-time course for inmates, it is a chance to learn traditional skills and make real changes in their lives and in their communities.

In addition to these new programs, ENR continues to deliver a number of core programs that support on-the-land activities. A major review of the Community Harvester Assistance Program, or CHAP, was recently completed, and the work has begun to implement all eight recommendations from the What We Heard Report. A final report on the CHAP review will be released in December 2022. A review of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program is underway and expected to be completed in spring 2023. The Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program will also be updated this winter.

Madam Speaker, we know that some traditional harvesters were impacted by the extreme floods we saw across the NWT in the spring of 2021 and 2022, damaging cabins and equipment that they rely on to hunt and trap. The Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program was there to help folks get back on the land to harvest. In 2021-2022, approximately \$346,000 was paid to 38 harvesters to help them with recovery. So far this year, approximately \$115,000 has been provided, with more claims anticipated.

This government recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge as an equal measure with scientific knowledge to guide our environmental research, monitoring and management programs. Community-based monitoring, developing an Alberta-NWT traditional knowledge framework for transboundary water monitoring, boreal caribou

range planning and a new Berry Expert Committee are just a few examples of programs underway. Elders, land users and other Indigenous knowledge holders contribute valuable information to support the NWT's environmental co-management system and inform the ongoing work across the government.

Madam Speaker, we have seen successes in working with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and individual harvesters across the NWT. However, we can all agree that there is more work to do. This government will continue to invest in and deliver programs that help Indigenous peoples in the North get out on the land, practice traditional activities, and support sustainable livelihoods.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.