

Waste Resource Management Strategy

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories committed in its mandate to develop a strategy to manage the resources and potential economic and environmental benefits derived from household, commercial and industrial garbage from private sector sources in our municipalities.

As part of fulfilling this commitment, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is currently engaging residents of the Northwest Territories on the development of a Waste Resource Management Strategy. We have already seen success with removing recyclables and electronics from our landfills. More than 24 million beverage containers were returned for recycling across the NWT in 2016-2017, and more than 112 tonnes of electronics were collected through the Electronics Recycling Program. On top of that, an estimated 6.6 million single-use retail bags were kept out of landfills and off the land.

A Waste Resource Management Strategy for the NWT will continue the work that we and our partners have accomplished together to protect our environment. Meetings have been taking place in communities across the territory over the past several weeks to hear from Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, residents and businesses on how we can best manage waste in the NWT. Residents can also provide feedback on through an online survey until February 28 by visiting the ENR website.

The Waste Resource Management Strategy will serve as our 10-year roadmap to reduce waste generated and disposed of in the NWT, extend the life of our landfills and help to prevent waste from contaminating our environment. It will also set the stage to reduce our government's long-term liabilities and the costs associated with the cleanup of hazardous waste. In addition, Mr. Speaker, good recycling programs reduce the energy needed to make new products and proper composting reduces the emission of methane, both of which will help us in the reduction of Green House Gases for the NWT.

The Strategy will guide us toward building a greener economy by exploring opportunities for businesses to specialize in waste management. Throughout this process, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will continue to work with our partners and NWT residents to identify potential areas of economic benefit and demonstrate how sound waste diversion programs can contribute to a sustainable NWT economy.

Mr. Speaker, a Waste Resource Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories has the potential to benefit our economy, while improving the lives of residents by keeping communities and the environment safe and healthy.

Our government greatly appreciates the input of our residents and stakeholders to help shape the future of sustainable waste management in the Northwest Territories. The Strategy and its implementation plan are expected to be completed by spring 2019. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of our public engagement once they are finalized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.