

Review of the Land Lease-Only Policy

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the Ministerial mandate commitment to review the Government of the Northwest Territories' Land Lease-Only Policy.

Mr. Speaker, the Land Lease-Only Policy was initially established in 1987 to ensure ongoing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations were not impacted through the sale of land.

Since then, our territory has changed in many ways. Our population and economy have grown, our communities are more developed, and the GNWT is responsible for most of the land and resources. While this progress is welcome, this growth comes with an increased need for land for housing, businesses, and community development, including in areas with ongoing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations.

Despite these changes in our territory, the Land Lease-Only Policy has not been updated since the mid-1990s. The recent review of the Policy concluded that the policy prevented the GNWT from meeting the land needs for housing, business, and community growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone in this House would agree that government policies should be dynamic and responsive to the needs of all within our territory. I share this belief.

Following the initial review, the Department of Lands engaged with the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat, Indigenous governments, and Standing Committee to resolve issues found during the review. I thank everyone who participated for their valuable feedback.

I can confirm that the department has reviewed all feedback and completed updates that consider all views and needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that effective April 1st, the Land Lease-Only Policy will be replaced with the Limitation of Land Sales Policy. This new policy will continue to meet the intended goal of restricting the sale of most vacant land within and outside communities in areas with continuing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations. It will also support other

policy goals of the GNWT related to housing, business, and community growth by changing the out-dated conditions for titling land.

Going forward, I am confident the new Limitation of Land Sales policy reflects feedback received through the engagement process. The revised policy will also meet the needs of many of our residents and communities now and into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.