

Mineral Resources Act Regulations – Status Report

Mr. Speaker, the regulations for the Northwest Territories *Mineral Resources Act* define the first made-in-the-NWT approach to governing mineral development. That is not the only thing that makes them historic, they are the first legal instrument to be developed in their entirety, under the Legislative Development Protocol set out by the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management. Last Friday, I tabled a report highlighting the status and success of the Intergovernmental Council's collaborative process.

This collaboration, Mr. Speaker, is deliberate and methodical. The Legislative Development Protocol that is being followed by the Intergovernmental Council formalizes seven steps for the development of regulations. Work is on-going, and as of June 2023, I am pleased to say that the development of regulations for the Northwest Territories *Mineral Resources Act* was in the sixth of these seven steps.

The goal is consensus, and consensus takes time. The policy decisions that must anchor the development of regulations require not only hearing but understanding and trying to reconcile wide-ranging perspectives, interests, and approaches. Very often, technical topics may first require participants to have expert subject matter support so that discussions lead to the best solutions.

The subject of benefits is a good example and was a topic with high interest from all parties. In the last year, the Intergovernmental Council technical working group was successful in reaching consensus on 54 subtopics under the otherwise broad subject of benefits. Benefits are only one of many high level matters relevant to these regulations.

In all, the Intergovernmental Council technical working group considered 112 public comments from 11 separate submissions, along with input and feedback from multiple targeted surveys, presentations, and face-to-face meetings. Approximately 90 per cent of this input has now been captured by the comprehensive policy intentions document that will guide legal drafters tasked with creating the regulations required.

The next step will be to finalize these draft regulations, and to post them publicly for review. Formal Section 35 consultations will also need to be completed with Indigenous governments. Once these steps are complete, the proposed regulations can be enacted.

Before the new Northwest Territories *Mineral Resources Act* comes into force, extensive work is also happening to update the associated business processes, implement complementary software changes and introduce the organizational change that will be needed to administer the new Act.

Mr. Speaker, resource availability, technology, market demand and global interest are aligning to create extraordinary opportunities for investment in the Northwest Territories' mineral resource sector.

The implementation early in the 20th Legislative Assembly of a new, clear, modern, and streamlined legislative environment grounded in the consensus of northern governments and, Indigenous and industry partners and focussed on the priorities of NWT residents, will be unique in Canada.

Thanks to the collaborative approach in which it was developed and the leading-edge policies that it is founded on, the Northwest Territories *Mineral Resources Act* will be a milestone in the evolution of the Northwest Territories that we can all look back and take pride in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.