

**Manufacturing Strategy**

Mr. Speaker, our territory is blessed with a resilient, ingenious manufacturing community.

Manufacturing is a small, but important industry that has high potential for the NWT, and is an important part of our government's commitment to diversifying our economy to give our residents more opportunity for success. Manufacturing contributes tens of millions of dollars annually and contributes nearly 150 jobs to our economy each year. The expansion and growth of our manufacturing sector offers a means to diversify the economy and encourage greater economic development and investment.

Our government committed in the mandate to expanding our manufacturing sector, identify potential areas of growth, promote and market products manufactured in the NWT and aid in professional and technological advancement of the industry.

Mr. Speaker, this work began last week with the announcement of public and stakeholder engagement that will inform our strategy development.

We have released a discussion paper and launched engagement on all-fronts, including in-person sessions in each of our regional centres, online discussion forums, and will accept input via email, telephone and mail.

Our first community visits were held this week in Inuvik and Norman Wells. We were happy to hear from residents about their vision and ideas around manufacturing in the Beaufort Delta and Sahtu. In coming weeks, we will also be

visiting Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, and Hay River — our territory's manufacturing hub.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to soliciting input from the public, we will be reaching out to manufacturers themselves, the industries that they service, other departments of government, and Regular Members to ensure a collaborative vision is created that will benefit a growing sector.

All of the perspectives we receive will be compiled with the help of subject matter experts to define a strategy that strikes a realistic and achievable balance between what we “need to do”, “want to do”, and “can do.”

Mr. Speaker, we are investigating and researching the market factors that determine what needs to be done. Our dialogues, public engagement sessions and industry meetings will identify stakeholders wishes. Facility tours and industry meetings will demonstrate what is and can be done.

The strategy we develop will need to include ways to expand the manufacturing base, identify potential growth areas, promote and market locally manufactured products and support the professional and technological advancement of manufacturing in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the drafting of a strategy is a first step, but it is an important one. I look forward to updating Members of this House as our work moves forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.