

Partner and Staff Appreciation for COVID Efforts

Mr. Speaker, increasing the number of affordable homes and reducing core housing need is a priority of this government. The difficult times that we are emerging from highlight that safe and secure housing is one of our highest needs. The delivery of housing services became more challenging given our need to stay healthy in preparation of COVID-19 through physical distancing.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the individuals and organizations involved in ensuring safe housing and affordable shelters are available to our residents. Many of these people work behind the scenes delivering critical services for housing solutions and emergency repairs.

I am proud and grateful for the work being done by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation staff and all of our community partners, such as local housing organizations and emergency shelter providers that help us to provide housing and homeless supports. These important front-line workers support approximately 2,800 units under Northwest Territories Housing Corporation programming and five emergency overnight shelters.

Indigenous government partners worked diligently with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. When faced with the uncertainty of how COVID-19 would impact their communities, the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government and the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation had no hesitation in offering to take on the administration of some public housing units for the purposes of self-isolation. While ultimately, these units were not required to address COVID-19, these communities and their leaders demonstrated to their people that they were prepared to do what it takes to keep their residents safe.

I want also to thank the private industry for their contributions during this time. Many landlords faced their own economic pressures. In the community of Hay River, I want to thank the owners of the North Country Inn, which was utilized to support some residents

experiencing homelessness. Large industry also wanted to help out. In Norman Wells, Imperial Oil Limited offered the use of some of its staff housing should it be required.

I want to recognize the work of staff at the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation who successfully continued to deliver essential services such as emergency repair programming, rent support and the Homelessness Assistance Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank our partners in delivering housing in the communities, who are facing their own challenges right now, like reductions in income, a lack of childcare, and dealing with the mental strain caused by the uncertainty around COVID-19. I want to express my gratitude for their commitment to housing our residents and their professionalism during this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.