

**THE HONOURABLE WALLY SCHUMANN
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT**

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Update on the Revitalization of the Great Slave Lake Fishery

Mr. Speaker, as part of this government's mandate to diversify the economy to provide greater opportunity for our residents, we are moving forward with our vision to revitalize the Great Slave Lake Fishery.

Since the release of our Revitalization Strategy, last year, we have been working to put in place the many elements needed to move our vision forward. We have researched and are confident that a market exists for the unique fresh-water fish that the Great Slave Lake can supply. We have identified, with the Tu Cho Cooperative, a viable business plan that will enable current and future NWT fishers to regain their livelihood and benefit from a direct say in a revitalized commercial fishing sector. More importantly, we have met and talked with fishers from both north and south of Great Slave Lake who have expressed approval and support for our plans.

As we prepare to take our next steps, Mr. Speaker, there are five components that will be essential to realizing our vision that include; a new fish processing plant in Hay River, run by a fisher's cooperative which can continue to sell to the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation, and its successor, as well as direct to market. Collection stations in Yellowknife and Fort Resolution, to enable fishers to access quota in other parts of Great Slave Lake, balance harvest and increase production. New fishers, to maintain quota and supply and ensure the continued viability of the sector for the future; a Marketing Strategy, that will develop a new northern brand,

identify target markets and expand sales; and new products, such as roe, fresh and frozen fillets and fertilizer, that will bolster the NWT product, make it more competitive and marketable and add to its economic value in support of local jobs and opportunities.

If anything, Mr. Speaker, our work to date has shown the importance of being flexible and fully responsive to opportunities and circumstances as they present themselves. To that end, we are moving quickly, in light of the federal government's upcoming year-end, to leverage partnership dollars that will allow us to finance the processing plant that is so pivotal to our revitalization plan. Costs for the plant will depend in part on equipment options. Should all funding be secured, we are prepared to invest as much as \$12 million into this critical piece of infrastructure.

We see the signing of the Integrated Bilateral Agreement with Infrastructure Canada as a positive step that opens the door for us to advance our work on the Hay River fish processing plant under the Investing in Canada Plan.

In the meantime, we are already working with the Department of Infrastructure on site selection, equipment purchasing, and a tender for building design.

Mr. Speaker, rebuilding a commercial fishery won't happen overnight. There is still much work to be done.

Even as we pursue funding options with the Government of Canada, the GNWT was the first to sign on to the new six-year Canadian Fish and Seafood Program Framework Agreement. Our participation in this framework will support the marketing requirements of our strategy and allow us to capitalize on growth

opportunities in the NWT as we transition to a more streamlined and collaborative fish and seafood sector in Canada.

The challenge before us, Mr. Speaker, is to connect and put all of these pieces in place in the next couple of months so that construction can begin in the summer of 2019 and a new fish plant will be ready to go in Hay River for the 2020 fishing season.

I look forward to updating Members of this Legislative Assembly on the progress of this exciting investment that will result in a revitalized and sustainable sector, a renewed livelihood for fishers, greater community wellness, local food production and added value to the NWT economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.