

Update on the 2030 Energy Strategy

Mr. Speaker, despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Government of Northwest Territories has continued to roll out energy initiatives under the 2030 Energy Strategy Action Plan that will help ensure NWT residents, communities, businesses and industry have access to secure, affordable and sustainable energy.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a mandate commitment to strengthen our leadership and authority on climate change, and one way we will achieve this is through the implementation of the 2030 Energy Strategy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly know, the Energy Strategy has six Strategic Objectives to reach the 2030 vision. They include:

1. Working together to find solutions: community engagement, participation and empowerment;
2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation in diesel-powered communities by an average of 25%;
3. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from road vehicles by 10% per capita;
4. Increasing the share of renewable energy used for space heating to 40%;
5. Increasing residential, commercial, and government building energy efficiency by 15%; and
6. The longer-term vision: developing the NWT's energy potential, addressing industrial emissions, and doing our part to meet national climate change objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to update Members today on the status of achieving these objectives.

A number of community projects have been funded jointly by the territorial and federal governments under the Greenhouse Gas Grant Program to reduce the use of fuel and lower emissions. For example, the YK1 School Board received funding to install wood pellet

boilers in two Yellowknife school facilities, and the Town of Fort Smith was funded to make energy efficiency and electric heating upgrades in three town buildings.

The Arctic Energy Alliance, AEA, also continued its Regional Office Program, which operates six regional offices to engage with communities, promote AEA programs, and provide support for local energy projects. Last year, this program invested \$800,000 into the work of these offices, resulting in over a million dollars' worth of energy rebates paid directly to communities, business and residents outside of Yellowknife for things like energy efficient appliances, efficiency upgrades to buildings, and alternative heating like wood stoves. This is out of a total AEA budget of about \$5.9million, of which there was a record total of \$1.9 million in rebates given out across the NWT last year. Over 50 percent of these rebates were provided to communities outside of Yellowknife.

The GNWT is advancing a project to build a 170-kilometer transmission line from the Taltson hydro system to serve Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Dory Point. This project is essential for the NWT to meet its greenhouse gas reduction commitments, providing about 15 percent of our total reduction target for electricity generation, and would remove up to one million litres of diesel and 2.75 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually. The project will use power from the existing Taltson system to eliminate the use of diesel for electrical generation in these communities and reduce the cost of power.

Mr. Speaker, to help residents reduce their emissions from transportation, the AEA launched an electric vehicle rebate program in June of this year, which provides rebates of \$5,000 for new electric vehicles and up to \$500 for charging stations in hydropower communities. The GNWT is also exploring new technologies that could help reduce transportation emissions, including liquid biofuels. The Department is currently conducting a study that will not only help us understand whether liquid biofuels can work in a cold northern climate, but also how factors like availability, storage, and cost affect their feasibility in Northern climates. This study is scheduled to be completed in early 2021.

With new federal funding from the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, the AEA launched new and expanded programs and nearly doubled the number of rebates it provided in 2019-2020 compared to the previous year, for an increase of 150 per cent worth almost a million dollars. These programs provided rebates to Northerners who purchased energy-efficient products such as wood stoves, LED lightbulbs and ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. They also provided rebates to communities that install renewable energy systems and support community energy plan implementation, and made it possible to run a program to help lower-income homeowners make energy efficiency upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT continues to lead by example in energy conservation and efficiency, by upgrading our own facilities through the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund. Last year, energy efficiency projects were funded including the Inuvik Hospital, Angik School in Paulatuk, and four schools in Hay River. Last year, these and other initiatives under the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund reduced greenhouse gas emissions by almost 15 thousand tonnes and saved the GNWT almost four million dollars.

As part of this government's long-term vision for our territories energy systems, the GNWT is currently upgrading both its hydro systems. At Snare Forks, a total overhaul of the generating unit was undertaken, and although delayed by COVID, work is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2020.

The Taltson overhaul was also delayed by COVID, but the facility underwent its annual maintenance shutdown last summer. During the shutdown, equipment assessments were completed to firm up design, manufacturing and procurement details for the major overhaul. Parts are scheduled to arrive in 2021, with the overhaul scheduled for 2022.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the initiatives that demonstrate our government's ongoing efforts – in conjunction with the Government of Canada, Indigenous and community governments, the AEA, and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation – to ensure residents, business and industry have access to secure and affordable energy, as we

transition to a strong, healthy economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels. The GNWT's annual Energy Initiatives Report, which will be released this fall, provides a full overview of last year's energy initiatives.

Quana, Mr. Speaker.