

Harvester Support For 2020-2021

Mr. Speaker, this year in particular has been hard for many Northwest Territories communities and residents who were already struggling to make ends meet. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new economic challenges for some families in the Northwest Territories.

In response to these concerns, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is increasing funding this year to support harvesters and families going out on the land. Three new programs will promote the sharing of land-based knowledge and provide training for the next generation of hunters and trappers: the Take a Family on the Land Program will provide subsidies to Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments and non-profits to help offset costs for families in need to go out on the land; the Regional Harvesting, Training, and Mentorship Support Program will provide funding to regional Indigenous governments to create mentorship opportunities and support land-based training needs; and the Pilot Trapper Mentorship Program will support trappers who want to learn trapping skills this season. Applications for the Take a Family on the Land and the Regional Harvesting, Training, and Mentorship Support Programs launched on October 21, 2020 and applications are now being accepted. The Pilot Trapper Mentorship Program will launch in November.

The Department has also increased the amounts for this year's grubstake payments. These payments are made to trappers at the beginning of the

season based on the number of furs brought in the year before. Trappers use these grubstake payments to help offset some of the annual start-up costs of trapping, which supports participation in the fur industry. This year trappers will be provided with more startup funds, and more trappers will be able to access the program.

As a government, we are committed to supporting our residents to go out on the land. During engagement on the Environment and Natural Resources Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, we heard from communities about the importance of mentorship programs for beginner harvesters and trappers. We also heard about the need to provide support for families to pursue on-the-land activities.

Each of these new programs draws on the strengths of northern traditions of land-based learning, mentorship, and sharing of knowledge. They support a number of actions identified in the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, including providing starter kits for new trappers, support for harvesting mentorship, and funding for families with limited resources to go out on the land.

The new funding for this season builds on the successful community partnerships that have been developed through our regular programs, such as Take a Kid Trapping, the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur program, Community Harvesters Assistance Program, Hunter Education and trapper training.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from Indigenous governments and organizations about the importance of land-based skills and knowledge. This government believes that sustainable livelihoods are vital to a prosperous, diverse and sustainable territory. Land-based skills and knowledge help ensure harvesters

can access nutritious country foods and that our communities remain strong and resilient. Environment and Natural Resources remains committed to supporting the next generation of harvesters and stewards of the land, and promoting sustainable access to country foods.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.