

**Marine Transportation Services
2020 Sailing Season and Community Re-supply**

Mr. Speaker, four years after the Government of the Northwest Territories launched its Marine Transportation Services, or MTS, we continue to improve our capacity to operate a reliable and professional marine shipping service in the North.

I am pleased to report that the 2020 community resupply has been successfully completed. The first shipments of the season departed Hay River on July 10 and the last delivery took place on September 19. Nearly 28 million litres of fuel and more than 63 hundred tons of cargo were delivered this season to communities on Great Slave Lake, the Mackenzie River, and the coastal communities.

Mr. Speaker, these deliveries were made possible by our able marine crews who worked tirelessly to overcome challenges posed by record high water levels and bad weather.

From the beginning of this season, MTS developed and executed a robust COVID-19 mitigation plan. Access to our cargo terminals was granted by appointment only, and only to those free of COVID-19 related symptoms. Customers were encouraged to use online forms to avoid in-person contact. To protect communities, designated drop-off cargo zones were created for the delivery of cargo, so that vessel crews would avoid contact with residents.

Regardless of the challenges posed by our Arctic environment, MTS remains committed to providing the best service possible to all customers. Our crews know that communities depend on our services for the delivery of essential goods.

Mr. Speaker, from deck hands to cooks; 171 people were employed at the peak of the resupply season. 92 of these workers are Northwest Territories residents, 64 are Indigenous.

We will continue our relationship with Transport Canada and the Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium to promote the Marine Training Centre in Hay River. Programs that are offered at the training centre include a Bridge Watch Rating Program, Small Vessel Operator Proficiency, and a Fishing Master's Program. Recent graduates have been employed on Canadian Coast Guard Arctic icebreakers and on our research vessel, operated by the Arctic Research Foundation. Nine graduates were employed on our own tugboats this resupply season.

These employment and training opportunities positively impact families and communities and support the long-term sustainability of the marine industry in the North.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to supporting training opportunities, the GNWT recognizes the need to support the marine industry by improving marine infrastructure and services.

For decades, fuel has been carried through our northern waters to our northern communities in single-hulled barges. Marine Transportation Services is improving our marine fleet with double-hulled barges to minimize the risk of a fuel spill and better protect our environment.

In August, four new double-hulled barges were delivered to Tuktoyaktuk. These new barges carry cargo on the deck, and below the deck can carry several types of petroleum products at the same time. I would like to thank the Government of Canada for providing \$19.5 million – or 75 per cent of the costs – through the Oceans Protection Plan.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT will continue to work with public and private marine partners to strengthen and support marine infrastructure and services in the Northwest Territories for the benefit of all Northerners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.