



October 16, 2020

MR. STEVE NORN
MLA, TU NEDHÉ - WIILIDEH

**Oral Question 239-19(2) Business Licence for
Łutselk'e Dene First Nation-Owned Frontier Fishing Lodge**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on May 27, 2020, regarding business licensing for the Łutselk'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) owned Frontier Fishing Lodge.

Lodges present a unique challenge from a regulatory perspective due to their remote location, array of building and equipment services, limited access to professional services, and the remote environment in which they operate. The recent change in ownership and the decision to begin operations of the Lodge this summer ahead of their planned opening triggered a number of licensing requirements that needed to be met.

The former owner of the Lodge did not previously hold a business licence, and its liquor permit was issued under a tourism licence. A liquor licence cannot be approved without a business licence. Liquor licences are administered by the Northwest Territories Liquor Licencing Board with the Department of Finance. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)'s intent is to engage with the Departments of Health and Social Services, Industry, Tourism and Investment, and Environment and Natural Resources to establish a committee to develop a Government of the Northwest Territories' policy position and a communication plan pertaining to the licensing and inspection of remote lodges.

MACA is developing guidelines to assist remote lodge owners in meeting minimum Territorial requirements set out in the *National Building Code* and *National Fire Code*, where applicable. The guidelines will comprise steps developed by the Office of the Fire Marshal Compliance Engineer, as well as a comprehensive communications plan to ensure minimal disruption and impact to fishing lodges and fishing lodge owners.

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An exemption for licensed tourism operators from the requirements of the current legislative framework is being advanced while the work of the proposed committee and the development of the guidelines are completed. The exemption order will apply to businesses holding a valid Tourism Operator's License under the *Tourism Act*, operating in a remote location, which includes any location that is not accessible by a permanent road structure or that is outside of a municipality's defined boundaries, and operating as a lodge. This is consistent with the application of the *Business Licence Act* prior to a number of legislative and policy interpretations which had resulted in the licensing issues faced by the LKDFN.

MACA is working closely with Frontier Lodge management to prepare for public safety, as well as getting their participation in discussions on how to address fire safety concerns in remote lodges in the future.

As I am no longer retaining responsibility for the portfolio of Municipal and Community Affairs, Minister Chinna has been briefed on this issue and is prepared to take future questions relating to this matter.

Thank you for your interest on this important topic.


Caroline Cochrane
Premier

c. Honourable Paulie Chinna
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs

Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs