



November 13, 2020

KATRINA NOKLEBY
MLA, GREAT SLAVE

Oral Question 399-19(2): Public Safety

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Questions you raised on October 22, 2020, regarding public safety and emergency services on Northwest Territories (NWT) highways.

Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) is committed to working with Government of the NWT departments, communities and stakeholders to determine and evaluate options for the provision of emergency services on territorial highways outside municipal boundaries. MACA is coordinating an interdepartmental committee looking at Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue services on territorial highways and have begun work with an interdepartmental working group to look at emergency services specific to the Ingraham Trail.

Currently, many communities in the NWT are challenged with the organization and delivery of emergency response services. There are numerous considerations involved in establishing or expanding any fire protection service. Some of these considerations include:

- The purchase of infrastructure including; buildings; fire apparatus, equipment and safety gear, all of which must meet recognized standards;
- Requirements for minimum staffing (paid/volunteer), training and certification on a wide range of equipment and topics;
- Policy and procedure development including legal authority to respond to and enter public property;
- Maintenance programming;
- Requirements for strict oversight for operational and administrative perspective by individual(s) with the requisite skills and knowledge to manage and respond to reported fires; and
- Requirements of the *Safety Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations the fire services must adhere to.

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Emergency services delivery typically grows and expands over a long period of time. It is important to consider the needs of all our communities for fire services as we look to expand services outside community boundaries to territorial highways.

MACA has developed a Community Fire Protection Plan to support the development and maintenance of community fire protection services in NWT communities. Once a fire service is well established it can expand to provide rescue, ground ambulance and other emergency services outside community boundaries. Should this be considered, it will require additional equipment, staffing, policies/procedures and oversight.

As mentioned, MACA is working with an interdepartmental working group to look at the emergency services on the Ingraham Trail and other areas of the territory. This work to identify what level of service may be appropriate and the possible service delivery options has just begun. At this point in time it is still too early in the process to consider purchasing fire and other rescue vehicles.

I have committed to reviewing this important work and will be providing an update to Cabinet and Standing Committee at an appropriate time.

Thank you for your interest on this important topic.



Paulie Chinna
Minister
Municipal and Community Affairs

c. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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

Ms. Eleanor Young
Deputy Minister
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