



February 02, 2021

MR. RYLUND JOHNSON
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE NORTH

Oral Question 484-19(2): Ingraham Trail Fire Services from Dettah

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on November 05, 2020, in regards to the option of having the community of Dettah provide fire services on the Ingraham Trail.

Many communities in the Northwest Territories are currently challenged with the organization and delivery of emergency response services. Key challenges include meeting safety requirements, following industry best practices, and maintaining sufficient volunteer staff. Once a fire service is well established, it can expand to provide fire, rescue and ground ambulance services outside community boundaries. This requires additional equipment, staffing, policies, procedures and oversight. Emergency services delivery typically grows and expands over a long period of time based on community needs.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)'s officials have had several meetings with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation over the past year and are continuing ongoing efforts to assist them in the development and growth of the Dettah Fire Department. At present, the community is taking a fire prevention approach with the Yellowknife Fire Department responding to and managing structural fires. The Dettah Fire Department has not matured in their capacity to a stage where they can respond to active fires at this time. MACA will continue its efforts in the provision of support and guidance to build fire response capacity in Dettah.

In exploring one option for service provision, MACA met with City of Yellowknife officials to determine interest in working toward a solution. The City is open to further discussions on an ongoing basis; however, it is too soon in the process to consider making any kind of offer for the City to continue providing services on the Ingraham Trail.

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MACA is working with an interdepartmental working group to look at the delivery of fire services on the Ingraham Trail and considering emergency services in other areas of the territory. This work, to identify what level of service may be appropriate and the possible service delivery options available, has just started. The working group is additionally tasked with identifying options for discussion with residents.

At this stage, it is too early to determine what service arrangement would be most suitable. MACA's intention is to engage with residents once some viable options related to the provision of services and the costs of that service are ready to share and consider. Clarity on these options will be a necessary starting point before the GNWT can engage with residents. The Department is working toward finding a solution before April 01, 2021.

I have committed to keeping Members of the Legislative Assembly informed on the progress of this work going forward. MACA will be providing an update to Standing Committee at an appropriate time on this important work.

Thank you for your interest and advocacy on this issue.



Paulie Chinna
Minister
Municipal and Community Affairs

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Deputy Minister, Municipal and Community Affairs