



MAR 29 2017

MR. KIERON TESTART
MLA, KAM LAKE**Oral Question 651-18(2): Arsenic Levels in Kam Lake**

This letter is in response to the Oral Question you raised on February 28, 2017 regarding concern for arsenic levels within the residential area of Kam Lake. As stated in the House, the Chief Public Health Officer released a Public Health Advisory on arsenic in 2016. This advisory was based on data from a number of recent reports prepared by different organizations that had done environmental assessments on those lakes.

We have since found some older data specific for Kam Lake, dating back from 1989-91, which indicated high levels of arsenic in water, but not in fish. As we receive new data, the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer will continue to update the map of affected lakes and their associated health advice. The public will be notified of any changes in warnings.

The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources are exploring ways in which information on environmental contaminants and their corresponding health messaging may be better and more effectively presented to the public. Please note that it is recommended not to drink untreated water from any body of water in the Northwest Territories, primarily due to the presence of harmful microorganisms. Residents may occasionally boil water taken from lakes for personal use, however, it is also recommended to avoid water located near areas of historical industrial activity, such as Kam Lake. In addition, boiling drinking water, while effective in killing harmful microorganisms, does not remove contaminants such as arsenic.

Thank you.

Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Servicesc. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative AssemblyMr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator, Executive