



MAR 13 2017

MR. MICHAEL NADLI  
MLA, DEH CHO

**Oral Question: 359-18(2): Updating the *Fire Protection Act (FPA)***

During the October 19, 2016 sitting of the Legislative Assembly, you asked what changes are being contemplated to the *Fire Prevention Act (FPA)*, and when new legislation will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly. You also asked if the Department is proposing any initiatives designed to support communities and their volunteer fire departments and whether highway rescue services will be considered in the revised fire prevention legislation.

Pursuant to Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Mandate #5.4.8, a comprehensive public review of the *FPA* is currently underway. The results of this initial round of consultation will end March 5, 2017, which will then form the basis of a second targeted round of consultation with key stakeholders. Although specific revisions have yet been confirmed, the Department's aim is to:

- Clarify regulatory controls and offences under the *FPA*;
- Clarify administrative roles and responsibilities under the *FPA*; and
- Strengthen enforcement provisions and penalties.

The Department anticipates submitting the Legislative Proposal to the Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) in February 2018, with a Bill to follow in October 2018.

Coinciding with an update to the *FPA* is a number of initiatives aimed at supporting community governments and volunteers. Priority actions in 2016-2017 included a community fire assessment tool; standard operating procedures templates for communities; and a derelict building management strategy piloted in Tuktoyaktuk in late 2015. Work by the Office of the Fire Marshal is underway to use the assessments to develop action plans that will help achieve an appropriate level of fire protection suitable for each community.

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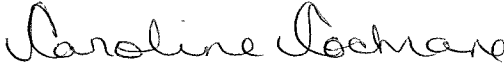
As you may know, the *FPA* regulates the investigation and reporting of fire hazards and adopts codes and standards related to fire prevention. It does not serve to address ground ambulance or highway rescue in the Northwest Territories, nor are similar statutes used for this purpose in other jurisdictions. The Department does not recommend utilizing the *FPA* for this purpose and a separate initiative is underway to identify actions necessary by the GNWT and community governments to maintain adequate and consistent emergency care on all territorial highways.

Commencing shortly, Municipal and Community Affairs will work closely with key communities to examine:

- relevant GNWT funding arrangements to ensure they adequately meet operational needs;
- municipal ground ambulance and highway rescue operations, including mobile equipment, budgets, expenditures, cost recovery, by-laws, and recent activity; and
- comparative inter-jurisdictional practice in relevant areas.

The goal is to develop a GNWT action plan that will help address identified gaps and deficiencies and establish a long-term vision involving rescue activities on territorial highways. Consideration of stand-alone legislation may be considered at that time. Work will begin in April 2017 and the project will take approximately six months to complete. The results of this work will be shared with SCOGO.

Thank you for your interest in the legislative priorities of the GNWT and raising these important issues.

  
Caroline Cochrane  
Minister of Municipal and  
Community Affairs

c. Mr. Tim Mercer  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings  
Legislative Coordinator  
Department of Executive