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MR. TOM BEAULIEU
MLA, TU NEDHE - WIILIDEH

Oral Question 455-18(2): Indigenous Natural Resource Guardians Program

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on November 3, 2016 regarding Indigenous Natural Resource Guardian Programs.

On October 5, 2016, a funding request of \$500 million was brought forward to Members of Parliament (MP) in Ottawa by delegates of the National Indigenous Guardians Gathering. The MP for the Northwest Territories, Michael McLeod, was in attendance. A presentation was provided to delegates by former Haida Nation leader, Miles Richardson. He presented on three potential 'tiers' of funding within the \$500 million funding request. The top tier, which would be the smallest portion, would fund the governance and administrative support, and form a National Board of Directors. The second tier would fund five to six regional bodies that would disperse funding within their regions and support training. Refined objectives on what the funding is used for at each level would need to be developed. The third tier, meant to be the largest, would provide on-going funding to deliver guardian programs on the ground. At this stage, there are no further outcomes from that meeting in Ottawa beyond the funding request and presentation. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is not aware of any federal timelines regarding this funding request.

At this point, there is no formal GNWT approach to Guardian Programs, but there are increasing levels of interest from Aboriginal communities. Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation would like to grow their existing Ni Hat Ni Dene Guardian Program. The other existing Guardian Program in the Northwest Territories (NWT), the Dehcho K'ehodi is funded by numerous partners. These partners include: Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) through the Interim Resource Management Assistance (IRMA) program for salary dollars and coordination, and ENR, Municipal and Community Affairs, Ducks Unlimited, Indigenous Leadership Initiative, TIDES Canada and Full Circle Funding for project planning and delivery (some of this support is in-kind). This program will require multi-year regional and community funding to be sustainable over the long-term.

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While ENR does not currently have specific a specific budget to support Guardian Programs there are a number of existing ENR initiatives that contribute to communities monitoring the land:

- IRMA – Dehcho K’ehodi
- On the Land Collaborative Fund – multiple partners (Diavik Diamond Mine Inc., Dominion Diamond Corporation, GNWT, Health Canada, Indigenous Leadership Initiative, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, NWT Community Advisors, NWT Recreation and Parks Association, TIDES Canada, TNC Canada, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation). This project funds community driven projects that:
 - Get people on the land;
 - Connect community members to their land, culture and traditions;
 - Build or strengthen partnerships;
 - Enhance community capacity; and,
 - Promote sustainability, in terms of the environment and the continuation of the program.
- Water Stewardship Strategy – Community-based Monitoring programs
- Traditional Economy – Take A Kid Trapping, Community Harvesters Assistance Program, the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur program and grants and contributions for Local Wildlife Committees
- NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program – science and traditional knowledge based research and monitoring
- Interim Resource Management Assistance
- Community-based harvest reporting program
- Community hunts
- Caribou health and condition monitoring
- University of Alberta six year program “Tracking Change” – local and traditional knowledge water changes (ENR support is in-kind as an Executive member)

- Wilfrid Laurier University Partnership projects

ENR understands the value of Guardian Programs and will continue to build partnerships and leverage funding that supports existing programs. We will continue to engage with federal partners to see if any additional funding opportunities arise.

Please contact my office if you wish to discuss further or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert C. McLeod
Minister
Environment and Natural Resources

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Executive