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The Honourable Caroline Cochrane
Premier of the Northwest Territories
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

March 24, 2021

RE: Transparent Process For Easing Restrictions Within the NWT

Dear Premier Cochrane,

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce has been lobbying for a series of “if this, then this” statements that outline milestones and key indicators for gradually easing restrictions within the NWT and eventually, opening our borders so we can welcome back out-of-territory visitors.

In the midst of a successful vaccination campaign, where more than 19,685 first doses and 12,389 second doses have been administered, we’re asking the GNWT to provide transparent criteria and metrics that will give businesses the information they need to plan their operations over the coming months.

Businesses need time to re-hire and train staff to accommodate increased capacity, they need to make investments in inventory, supplies and equipment repairs. We want to avoid a situation where there’s a surprise announcement that restrictions are eased, and businesses are left scrambling to adapt.

Our member businesses have been at the front line of implementing public health orders; they have been adaptive, responsive, and responsible and they deserve a transparent set of guidelines to understand the conditions that must be met to:

- remove capacity restrictions on outdoor gatherings;
- increase indoor capacity limits;
- establish travel bubbles with other responsible Canadian jurisdictions;
- welcome tourists back into the NWT through the elimination of self-isolation requirements.

The current approach of case-by-case exemptions and vague announcements that do not provide clarity or certainty for businesses is inefficient and lacks transparency and accountability. We’re asking the GNWT to establish specific, measurable, standards so businesses have greater certainty for operational planning purposes.

Respectfully,

Tim Syer
President
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Deneen Everett
Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce