

Standing Committee on
Social Development



Report on the Review of Bill 13: *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act*

19th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Ms. Caitlin Cleveland

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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MLA Hay River South

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Jackie Jacobson
MLA Nunakput

Rylund Johnson
MLA Yellowknife North


Frieda Martselos
MLA Thebacha

March 2, 2021

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its *Report on the Review of Bill 13: An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act* and recommends it to the House.



Ms. Caitlin Cleveland
Chair, Standing Committee on
Social Development

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 13: AN ACT TO AMEND THE
INTERPRETATION ACT**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 13: AN ACT TO AMEND THE INTERPRETATION ACT

INTRODUCTION

Bill 13 *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act*, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development October 29, 2020. Bill 13 amends *Interpretation Act* to remove references to *Mountain Standard Time and Daylight Savings Time* and replaces them with a reference to one standard time. Bill 13 will allow the Commissioner in Executive Council to replace the current Daylight-Saving Time regulations, with permanent year-round time standard regulations.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF BILL 13

Committee invited written and in-person submissions from municipal and Indigenous governments, organizations, education councils and the business community. Committee received seven written submissions from:

- Nahanni Construction Ltd. / Cold Weather Construction Experts
- Dehcho Divisional Education Council
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Dettah Administration
- Sahtu Divisional Education Council
- Mayor and Council, Town of Hay River
- Dave Nickerson
- David Wasylciw
-

Submissions received by Committee are attached in Appendix A and Committee thanks those who took the time to share their views.

The submissions received by Committee are broadly supportive of allowing the Government to amend daylight savings time to one fixed time. Committee notes that the submission from the Mayor and Council of the Town of Hay River provided support conditional on Alberta advancing changes to one standard time.

COMMITTEE REVIEW

Committee also considered recommendations from the work done by the 18th Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Social Development. In the report Review of motion 32-18(2), referral of petition 6-18(2): Elimination of Time Change in the Northwest Territories¹, Committee acknowledges an elevated level of attention from the public. Petition 6-18(2) had 533 signatures from residents of 18 different NWT communities, supporting the Government of the Northwest Territories to move to one standard time.

Prior to making any changes to the Daylight-Saving Time Regulations, Committee report recommendations advise the Government of Northwest Territories to consider conducting broad public and targeted stakeholder engagement and to consult with counterparts in Alberta.

CONCERNS

In their review of Bill 13, Committee shared concerns about the lack of options for government public engagement and consultation prior to the Commissioner in Executive Council making changes to the Daylight-Saving Time Regulations. This concern was addressed by a Committee motion to amend Bill 13. Committee's Motion requires the Minister to conduct public engagement with residents of the Northwest Territories regarding the elimination of the time change and prior to the setting of standard time.

CLAUSE-BY-CLAUSE REVIEW

A clause-by-clause review of the Bill and public hearing was held on February 9, 2021. Committee moved one motion to amend Bill 13, which is attached in Appendix B. The motion was carried, and the Minister concurred with the motion. Committee thanks the Honorable R.J. Simpson, Minister of Justice, and members of his staff for their appearance before Committee.

¹ [Report on Motion 32-18\(2\), Referral of Petition 6-18\(2\): Elimination of Time Change in the Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Social Development. October 19, 2017.](#)

CONCLUSION

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 13: *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act*, as amended and reprinted, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Committee thanks all those who took the time to make written submissions on this Bill.

This concludes the Standing Committee's review of Bill 13.

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

From: [Gerry Burla](#)
To: [Gerry Burla](#)
Subject: FW: Changes to the Interpretation Act
Date: February 23, 2021 1:37:06 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[2020-12-18 - Changes to the Interpretation Act.pdf](#)

From: Corporate Nahanni Construction [mailto:corporate@nahannincl.com]
Sent: December 18, 2020 3:26 PM
To: Crystal Cockney
Subject: RE: Changes to the Interpretation Act

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's name and email address and know the content is safe.

Hi Crystal,

As a business owner, in the midst of a global pandemic, struggling to keep my business alive it is extremely disheartening for me to see this topic as one that requires discussion.

If this is what our government is focused on then it's probably time for a new government.

Please forward this email on to MLA Cleveland, every other MLA and anyone else who sat in meetings to discuss daylight savings time.

I will forward this response to the rest of the business community to remind them of the important issues our tax dollars are funding.



Kenny Ruptash – Vice President Projects
Nahanni Construction Ltd. | Cold Weather Construction Experts
T (867) 873-2975 | F (867) 873-9620 | C (867) 444-9717
E kenny@nahannincl.com

From: Crystal Cockney [mailto:Crystal_Cockney@ntassembly.ca]
Sent: December 18, 2020 3:17 PM
Subject: Changes to the Interpretation Act

Dear Stakeholder,

Please find attached correspondence from Ms. Caitlin Cleveland, Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, seeking your input regarding Changes to the Interpretation Act.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Committee Clerk, Mr. Gerry Burla at Gerry_Burla@ntassembly.ca,

Mársı | Kinanāskomitin | Thank you | Merci | Hąı' | Quana | Qujannamiik | Quyanainni | Máhsı | Máhsı | Mahsi
Crystal Cockney

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories | Assemblée législative des Territoires du Nord-Ouest
PO Box 1320 | C. P. 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
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Fax | Téléc. : 867-873-0432

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From: [Philippe Brulot](#)
To: [Gerry Burla](#)
Subject: FW: Changes to the Interpretation Act
Date: December 18, 2020 3:42:33 PM
Attachments: [2020-12-18 - Changes to the Interpretation Act.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's name and email address and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon Ms. Burla,

This is a quick email to express that I fully support the option to grant the discretionary powers this Act will place with the Government in relation to a future decision on retaining Daylight Saving Time.

My position is that our Government has the ability to see the big picture and how all the departments, territorial bodies and interest groups would be affected. Our government is able to determine what is in the best interest of the GNWT and its people.

Sincerely,

P. Brulot
Superintendent, DDEC

From: [Jason Snaggs](#)
To: [Gerry Burla](#)
Subject: RE: Changes to the Interpretation Act
Date: January 5, 2021 7:50:13 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's name and email address and know the content is safe.

Reasons to eliminate Day Light Savings:

1. Costs
 - a. Costs to the economy individuals, businesses and governments that arise from daylight-saving-time changes. Adjustments to clocks and additional monitoring of computer and payroll systems.
 - b. Absenteeism, loss productivity during adjustment

2. Negative Socio-Health Impact.
 - a. The negative impact to shifts in our circadian rhythm. The shift can lead to what psychologists call sleep desynchronization. *“Cognitive impairment associated with this state of mind has been shown to significantly increase the risk of car accidents – whether the clocks shift forward or back. Sleep is so critically important to a well-functioning brain that sleep disruption has been implicated as a potential factor leading up to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the space shuttle Challenger explosion, the Chernobyl nuclear mishap, and other disasters worldwide.”*
 - b. Heightened Anxiety
 - c. Increased pedestrian fatalities, reduced vitamin D exposure and increased violent-crime incidence.

Kind regards & Mahsi Cho,



Jason Snaggs
Chief Executive Officer
Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Dettah Administration
PO Box 2514, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P8

Tel. (867) 873-4307 Ext-2002
Fax (867) 873-5969
E-mail jasonS@ykdene.com
Website www.ykdene.com

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From: Melissa Mackenzie <mmackenzie@ykdene.com>
Sent: January 4, 2021 11:10 AM
To: Edward Sangris <esangris@ykdene.com>; Jason Snaggs <jasons@ykdene.com>
Subject: FW: Changes to the Interpretation Act

From: Crystal Cockney <Crystal_Cockney@ntassembly.ca>
Sent: December 18, 2020 3:17 PM
Subject: Changes to the Interpretation Act

Dear Stakeholder,

Please find attached correspondence from Ms. Caitlin Cleveland, Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, seeking your

input regarding Changes to the Interpretation Act.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Committee Clerk, Mr. Gerry Burla at Gerry_Burla@ntassembly.ca,

Mársı | Kinanāskomitin | Thank you | Merci | Hajı' | Quana | Qujannamiik | Quyanainni | Máhsı | Máhsı | Mahsi

Crystal Cockney

Clerk and Committees Administrative Coordinator | Greffière et coordonnatrice administrative des comités

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From: [Renee Closs](#)
To: [Gerry Burla](#)
Subject: Changes to Interpretation Act
Date: December 21, 2020 9:42:41 AM

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Good morning, I would be in favour of changing the policy on daylight savings time to reflect one fixed time. I would prefer, whatever the decision may be, that the change allow for the greatest amount of daylight in the evenings during the winter months.

Thank you for allowing me to provide my feedback.



Renee Closs
Superintendent

rcloss@sahtudec.ca

SAHTU Divisional Education Council
Ełehé iłdó ts'enazhe / Growing Forward Together

Box 9
1 Harbourview Crescent Norman Wells, NT
X0E 0V0

t: 867-587-3450 f: 867-587-2551 | www.sahtudec.ca

Email secured by Check Point

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100-62 Woodland Drive
Hay River, NT X0E 1G1
Phone: 867-874-6522
Fax: 867-874-3237
email: mayor@hayriver.com

January 20, 2021

Sent Via Email

Mr. Gerry Burla
Committee Clerk, Social Development
Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly
PO Box 1320
4570-48th Street
Yellowknife NT
X1A 2L9

Mr. Burla:

Mayor and Council of the Town of Hay River met on Monday, January 11th, 2021 to discuss the proposed changes to the Interpretation Act to provide discretionary powers to the GNWT in relation to replacing Daylight Saving Time. Council offers its support for the GNWT's sole discretion in making that determination.

With respect to the change from Daylight Saving Time to one fixed time standard, Council supports the change but believes it should be conditional on the Province of Alberta also making the change. Should you have any questions, please contact the Town of Hay River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kandis Jameson".

Kandis Jameson
Mayor
Town of Hay River

From: [Dave Nickerson](#)
To: [Gerry Burla](#)
Subject: Bill 13
Date: December 21, 2020 2:39:26 PM

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's **name and email address** and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Burla,

Please bring to the attention of the responsible committee my support for the Amendment to the Interpretation Act that would rid us of the nonsensical Daylight Saving Time.

Thanks.

Dave Nickerson

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Email secured by Check Point

David Wasylciw
Yellowknife, NT
david@wasylciw.com

February 9, 2021

Standing Committee on Social Development
Legislative Assembly
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Re: Public Review of Bill 3, An Act To Amend The Interpretation Act

Dear Standing Committee members,

Thank you for holding a public review of *Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Interpretation Act*. The topic of changes to daylight savings time is very topical right now with the Yukon having standardized their timezone last year. The bill as proposed provides for an interesting solution to ensuring the NWT's timezone stays in line with other jurisdictions by providing the Commissioner (via Cabinet) the authority to vary our definition of standard time. I understand that this bill is considered a minor enabling change and that it will likely move ahead.

That said, the bill is confusing as it does not set the specific criteria for changing the territory's timezone, nor does it limit the changes available to Cabinet, nor even set a date for these new powers to come into force, it simply gives up the House's role in the decision. Delegating MLA's authority to make important decisions on legislation to regulations gives up the ability for MLAs to fully represent their constituents on the matter.

For an issue with no apparent urgency, to set a precedent that MLAs should just pass to Cabinet your decision-making authority on a matter that could significantly impact residents and businesses seems shortsighted.

I would urge MLAs to reject this legislation and ask the Government to bring forward legislation at the appropriate time, to either actually change our timezone or set specific criteria (such as our neighbour Alberta removing daylight savings time) that would trigger the change.

I expect there will be a healthy public discussion when the possibility changing our timezone comes forward and it will be important for MLAs to represent their constituents interests in that debate. If MLAs aren't at the table representing their constituents, what purpose does the House serve?

Thank you again for providing this opportunity to comment.

Regards,



David Wasylciw

Cc: Caroline Cochrane, MLA, Range Lake

APPENDIX 2: MOTION

MOTION

AN ACT TO AMEND THE
INTERPRETATION ACT

That clause 5 of Bill 13 be deleted and the following substituted:

Coming into force

5. (1) This Act comes into force on a day to be fixed by order of the Commissioner.

Opportunity for public engagement

(2) Before this Act comes into force, the Minister shall ensure that there is an opportunity for public engagement with residents of the Northwest Territories regarding the elimination of the time change and the setting of standard time.

MOTION

LOI MODIFIANT LA
LOI D'INTERPRÉTATION

Il est proposé que l'article 5 du projet de loi 13 soit supprimé et remplacé par ce qui suit :

5. (1) La présente loi entre en vigueur à la date fixée par décret de la commissaire. Entrée en vigueur

(2) Avant l'entrée en vigueur de la présente loi, le ministre veille à ce que les résidents des Territoires du Nord-Ouest aient la possibilité de s'exprimer à l'égard de l'élimination du changement d'heure et du réglage de l'heure normale. Possibilité d'engagement public