



March 30, 2022

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER SOUTH

Oral Question 1028-19(2): Access to Clean Water

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you asked on March 10, 2022, regarding the access to clean drinking water in communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

Over the past 20 years, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has worked in partnership with the federal government and NWT community governments to improve drinking water in the NWT. Within the GNWT, the Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), Health and Social Services, Infrastructure, and Environment and Natural Resources work collaboratively to focus on water-related issues and provide support to community governments.

All NWT communities have access to clean drinking water. As of October 2020, when Wekweètì commissioned their new water treatment plant, all water plants in the NWT have plants that were built to meet National Guidelines. In the last 20 years, 23 communities have upgraded their water treatment systems: 16 communities have constructed new modern water treatment plants and an additional seven have gone through mid-life retrofits or upgrades to meet standards.

MACA's work with communities does not end with this, as infrastructure ages, technologies change and climate change impacts are felt, support communities to be provided to communities. MACA supports municipal operations with Water System Assessments and upgrade plans, as well as regular circuit rider visits to help operators upgrade their skills in running their plants. Upcoming work includes assistance with mid-life upgrades to some of the older water treatment systems in the territory.

In addition, MACA is actively supporting local water treatment plant operators in training and certification. The focus on community water treatment plants and community governments' investment in their staff has been a success.

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The last three communities where the water treatment plants were being operated by the Department of Infrastructure now have responsibility for the operations and maintenance of their plant. All 30 water plants in the NWT are operated by local residents.

Safe drinking water is vital to the health and quality of life of our residents and our interdepartmental team will continue to support safe drinking water from source water protection to drinking water treatment and the drinking water distribution system.



Shane Thompson
Minister
Municipal and Community Affairs

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs