



September 23, 2022

MS. JANE WEYALLON ARMSTRONG
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Oral Question 1127-19(2) Increasing Cost of Fuel

This letter is in follow-up to the question raised on June 1, 2022, regarding the cost of fuel, where I committed to having a discussion with Cabinet on how this government can provide further fuel subsidies and/or programs to ensure residents can get out on the land.

The Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) currently has several programs in place to address this issue.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) offers various programs under the Income Security Programs to provide financial support to residents, including the Income Assistance (IA) program and the Senior Home Heating Subsidy (SHHS).

The IA program provides financial assistance to help meet basic and enhanced needs, including actual shelter and fuel costs. In 2021-22, the IA program assisted approximately 468 households in the Tłı̨chʔ region.

The SHHS program provides financial assistance to low-to-modest income seniors to help offset the cost of heating their homes. The SHHS program is a subsidy and not intended to cover all heating costs. Seniors who have used their full SHHS entitlement and are still in financial need are encouraged to apply for IA. In 2021-22, the SHHS program assisted approximately 65 households in the Tłı̨chʔ region.

ECE is currently undertaking a review of the IA program to ensure its objectives, benefits and delivery method support the social and economic aspirations of the people of the Northwest Territories (NWT), and to create a new IA program specially for seniors and persons with disabilities. As part of the IA review, ECE is also evaluating the SHHS. ECE is aware of the rising heating costs and is continuing to monitor this situation to determine how to support seniors through its Income Security Programs.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) also offers several programs that directly assist with the cost of fuel, or supports residents engaged in traditional land-based activities.

The Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP) provides funding to renewable resource councils, hunters and trappers committees, and Indigenous governments (in unsettled land claim areas) to help support a portion of capital and operating costs of harvesting activities by their respective memberships.

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ENR also supports harvesters through the Take a Family on the Land, Take a Kid Trapping, and Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation programs.

These programs offered by the GNWT assist in reducing the overall price of fuel for residents in the NWT and provide support to Northerners engaged in traditional on the land activities. In addition, some hunters and trapper organizations also provide subsidies or amounts of free fuel for harvesters.

Despite these efforts across the GNWT and other groups, the overall impact on global gas price due to the Ukraine-Russia war must not be understated. Reducing the cost of living is a priority of this Legislative Assembly. While we can't control the impacts of geo-political tensions on the price of commodities, the GNWT is making investments in energy efficiency and in alternative energy through the *2030 Energy Strategy*, which guides the development of affordable, secure and sustainable energy for transportation, heat, and electricity in the NWT.



Diane Archie
Minister, Infrastructure

c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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Honourable R.J. Simpson, Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

Honourable Shane Thompson, Minister
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Dr. Erin Kelly, Deputy Minister
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