



Via Email Only

May 23, 2023

Caroline Cochrane
Premier
Government of the NWT
Caroline_cochrane@gov.nt.ca

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister of Finance
Government of the NWT
Caroline_wawzonek@gov.nt.ca

Dear Premier Cochrane and Minister Wawzonek,

Re: Hay River Disaster Emergency Funds

As you are aware, residents of the K'atlo'deeche First Nations and Hay River area have been devastated for the second year in a row with severe disasters. Some residents still have not recovered from the flooding in the region from this exact time last year, and are now being hit hard by the out of control wildfires.

Almost all of the residents of this region have been hit financially by the evacuations for two years. People who have been evacuated and those who have been unable to work remotely or in other positions have been forced to use up their leave banks (if even they have them) or go without pay, through no fault of their own. In addition, the vast majority of workers in the region did not have paid covid sick leave through the last three years, which has further overwhelmed them financially. This is an extreme and urgent situation for these residents. The UNW has already received numerous pleas for help from evacuees, member and non-member alike.

The UNW is calling on the NWT Government to provide financial relief to residents affected by the floods, fires, and pandemic over the last two to three years.

We are calling for an **Evacuation Relief Fund be established immediately** to assist NWT residents affected by mandatory evacuation from their homes and are unable to work for 2 or more days. The funds could be used to cover, most importantly, lost wages including lost banked leave paid out, but also transportation, accommodations, food, and other necessities. Funds should be based on a dollar amount per adult and per child in each family.

I would be happy to discuss this with you further, either in person or by videoconference.

Sincerely,

Gayla Thunstrom
UNW President

cc: All MLAs