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**HANSARD**

**Thursday, February 9, 2023**

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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

(Sahtu)  
*Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat*

**Mr. Richard Edjericon**

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Hon. Julie Green**

(Yellowknife Centre)  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendah)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

**Ms. Jane Weyallon Armstrong**

(Monfwi)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, February 9, 2023****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):**  
Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 298-19(2):  
SESSIONAL STATEMENT – FEBRUARY  
2023

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleagues back for the February to March 2023 sitting of the 19th Legislative Assembly. I hope you all had an opportunity over the last few months to spend time in your constituencies hearing from residents and stakeholders so we can collectively and collaboratively work together to advance the priorities of the people who elected us to represent them.

With just under eight months left in the life of this government, we have much work to do. We must find ways to continue to advance the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly in the spirit of partnership and collaboration. I, along with my Cabinet colleagues, look forward to working with you to improve the lives of residents.

The past three years have been interesting to say the least. At the beginning of this Legislative Assembly, the first global pandemic in over a century required us to quickly shift our focus and prioritize protecting the health and well-being of Northerners. As we slowly adjusted to COVID-19 as endemic, we faced previously unseen flooding in communities, which challenged the Government of the Northwest Territories, communities and residents. Soon after, geopolitical instability, supply chain issues, and rising costs became a concern as Canada reached a 40-year high inflation rate last summer. Cost increases continue to raise an already high cost of living

for Northerners. All these issues have influenced the government's priorities and resource investments.

Although we needed to shift our priorities depending on the situation, the work of government continued, and we have made significant progress on the commitments that make up the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have fulfilled 48 percent of our mandate commitments to date, up from 23.5 percent this time last year. 48 percent of commitments are in progress, down from 65 percent in February 2022, and we have no commitments still in the planning process. At this time, 4 percent of commitments are delayed and 0.5 percent have been discontinued.

Mr. Speaker, this progress has been made despite the government having to refocus and redeploy staff as we shifted our full attention to protecting the lives and well-being of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. When people look back at the legacy of this government and the 19th Legislative Assembly, it will primarily be remembered as the government that navigated the most significant public health crisis in the last century.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are so much more than that. Over the course of the next eight months, the Government of the Northwest Territories will deliver on a number of actions outlined in the mandate. This includes advancing several outstanding land claims with hope to conclude several of them. We will also complete a draft homelessness strategy to be tabled in this House; we will reduce the municipal funding gap by \$5 million; complete regional economic development plans; and finish reviews on the Income Assistance and Student Financial Assistance Programs. Based on our mandate progress to date, I am confident and optimistic that by the end of this government, the Northwest Territories will be better positioned for a brighter future.

The last three years we have also increased the focus of reconciliation. Just a few short weeks ago, the Northwest Territories Council of

Leaders, which this government is a member, agreed to a memorandum of understanding to work together to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This MOU gives us a collaborative path forward on the development of a legislative framework for a new NWT law that will implement the United Nations declaration, and a five-year action plan to ensure effective implementation of the law.

This MOU is a powerful example of what reconciliation looks like. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to advancing the implementation of the United Nations declaration in the Northwest Territories and together, in partnership with Indigenous governments, we are one step closer to this historic achievement.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous people have the right to enjoy the same benefits their fellow Canadians enjoy, including freedom from poverty, a first-world standard of living, good physical and mental health, and access to good-paying jobs, and economic opportunities in their home community and region. By implementing the United Nations declaration in partnership with Indigenous leadership, we are building an NWT in which the human rights of Indigenous peoples are respected, celebrated, and implemented in every aspect of society. I am confident that we will achieve this work in the life of this government.

While the Government of the Northwest Territories will be the home of the legislation, we must ensure, with our Indigenous government partners, that the legislative framework meets the needs of Indigenous people and the governments that represent them. The United Nations declaration will solidify already existing work that has been ongoing for decades in the Northwest Territories. Indigenous people must be part of the decision-making process, and their views and priorities must be represented at the very heart of our public government. They must not simply be a special interest group to be consulted as part of the process.

The Northwest Territories is a leader in Canada, and an example of how genuine partnerships with regional and community Indigenous governments, based on mutual respect and recognition, can lead to increased political self-determination and economic participation for the North's Indigenous people.

This government has also been outstanding in our housing supports. We have brought more federal funding to the Northwest Territories for housing than ever seen before. By the end of this Legislative Assembly, we will have also

implemented the largest increase in public housing units in decades, meeting one of the most critical mandate commitments of the 19th Legislative Assembly. By the fall of 2023, 100 new housing units will have been added to our public housing stock across the territory. In addition to the housing units put into place by the Government of the Northwest Territories, there has been an unprecedented investment in Indigenous government housing capacity.

Mr. Speaker, this major accomplishment was achieved because of strong partnerships we have built with Canada and Indigenous governments to address the diverse housing needs of residents in all regions of the territory. This collaborative work is helping us to develop housing solutions that will benefit residents and the communities in which they live. The GNWT recognizes that we cannot address the housing needs alone. We are pleased that Indigenous governments are now playing a significant role in housing, and the federal government continues to provide funding directly to Indigenous governments and to the GNWT for housing in the NWT.

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to housing in the territory. Indigenous communities and governments have different needs, aspirations, and varying capacity. Housing solutions must be tailored to their unique circumstances. Only through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and communities, will we be able to effectively address the NWT's housing crisis and put us on a clear path to meet our mandate commitment to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing need in communities across the territory.

The Government of Northwest Territories is also committed to an energy system that contributes to the territory's economic, social, and environmental well-being, while doing our part to transition to a lower carbon economy. The GNWT, with the assistance of the federal government, plans to invest approximately \$194 million to implement the 2030 Energy Strategy over the next three years. This is on top of the approximately \$138 million worth of energy-related investments made as part of the 2019-2022 Energy Action Plan. These investments support the goal of making our energy system more affordable and reliable while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They will help stabilize the cost of power, increase alternative and renewable energy use, and explore the potential for longer term transformational projects and emerging technologies. By 2025, we will have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 51 kilotons,

and our reduction trends show that we are on our way to meeting the reduction target, which is 30 percent of 2005 levels, by 2030.

The rising cost of living is having a significant impact on NWT residents and businesses. Access to secure, affordable, and sustainable energy is vital for economic growth in the territory. By making investments that stabilize the cost of power, increase the use of alternative and renewable energy, and advance plans like the Inuvik Wind Project, the Fort Providence-Kakisa Transmission Line, and the Taltson Hydroelectricity Expansion Project, we are not only doing our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but we are also supporting a green economy in the North.

Mr. Speaker, in early December 2022, I was in Ottawa with Members of Cabinet, to meet with federal cabinet ministers and the prime minister, to make our case on several key priorities in advance of the 2023 federal budget. These priorities help set the Northwest Territories up for economic growth and social success. We want to build on the partnership we had with Canada during the pandemic and to move key initiatives forward. Canada has been a supportive partner, but we need to move towards additional investment. We want to create connections in the territory. We want to expand our green energy potential, support a net-zero future, expand our critical mineral opportunities, make education for Northerners more accessible, and build strong, safe, and thriving communities that demonstrate security through sovereignty.

However, with our limited resources, collaboration with the Government of Canada and Indigenous governments is critical to closing the gap between the North and southern Canada. Projects like the Taltson Hydro Expansion, Mackenzie Valley Highway, and the creation of the Northwest Territories' first polytechnic university, will develop our economic potential, support the transition to a green economy, and improve the quality of life for residents in the NWT.

We have a lot to offer, and we want to contribute to Canada's economic future. The transformational opportunities that exist will not only support the development of our true economic potential, they will support national efforts to transition to a low-carbon economy and create long-lasting economic benefits that will be good for all Canadians.

The Northwest Territories is positioned to be at the heart of the shift to a low-carbon economy. This means we can be a leader in the green mining and green energy technologies needed to help grow Canada's economy and achieve

its objective of net-zero emissions by 2050. Resource revenues from the development of critical minerals and natural resources will provide direct benefit to our government, Indigenous governments, and to Canada.

In an interview late last year, I was asked about the general criticism that the Government of the Northwest Territories does not know how to do things differently and when it comes to the economy, we are stuck in our ways. Our government is just too small to make transformational investments on its own. We do not have the population base to generate revenues adequate to run the kind of catch-up needed given the history of development in the Arctic versus elsewhere. Canada's leading economic provinces did not get to where they are today without the support of federal investment and private investors. The North is in a similar position today. The opportunity exists, and we must establish the partnerships and build the relationships that will bring investment into our territory for the benefit of all our residents.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crucial time for the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned earlier, this pivotal time gives me hope for our future. Investments in infrastructure are needed and, arguably, owed to the people who call Canada's North home. We have spent this government building the necessary relationships in Ottawa to advance projects that will change the Northwest Territories. We are in a position to see the hard work we have put in over the last three years pay off in a way that will alter the territory's future for the better. We have changed how we do things when it comes to working with Indigenous governments. These changes will help support current and future economic growth and prosperity, as well as the economic self-determination of Indigenous governments across the territory.

The Legislative Development Protocol is the first agreement of its kind in Canada. It supports the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by respecting, consulting, and collaborating with Indigenous governments on land and resource management.

Mr. Speaker, I have never been content with negotiations continuing the way they have in the past. I made it clear when I ran for Premier that it was time to focus on collaboration and partnership. Change was needed. That is why we have eliminated the negotiating mandate on core principles and objectives from our negotiation approach in the interests of making progress, and because it was the right thing to do. For the first time, we have made public the

key principles and interests that guide the Government of the Northwest Territories at the negotiating table to ensure transparency and clarity to the other negotiating parties. No more do negotiators have to guess what our mandates are.

As a government, we have unpacked how we procure goods and services and prepare the contracts to see them through. We are exploring a benefit retention approach, and we are prepared to make changes as necessary to ensure the most benefit to northern businesses and residents.

Mr. Speaker, these are long-standing foundational elements of our economy that we are opening up. We are working to increase regional decision-making when it comes to the economy. We will introduce an innovation action plan, a first for the Northwest Territories, in the area of the knowledge economy. We have turned the page to a new chapter for the NWT mining industry that is focused on rare earth elements and critical minerals. We are leveraging Indigenous partnership and participation in mining, as well as our robust regulatory system of which we are a leader in environmental, social, and governance practices. These are not examples of the same ole same ole. They are changes that will affect not only this government but will impact the way we do business in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this sitting, several bills will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly as part of our efforts to advance legislative initiatives that this government has been working on over the course of this term. We are expecting to introduce several bills during this sitting, including bills that will advance reconciliation, improve healthcare, support businesses, impact women's lives across the territory, and support our collective efforts to improve the lives of residents and communities. This work can only be completed by working closely with Regular MLAs in the spirit of collaboration and partnership. I look forward to healthy constructive discussion and debate on these legislative initiatives.

The Finance Minister has tabled the last budget of the 19th Legislative Assembly. This budget focuses on where we are going in the next eight months to ensure that the momentum that we have created carries on to the next Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we are putting the COVID-19 pandemic behind us. Despite the challenges faced, the Government of the Northwest Territories has maintained stability during a time of uncertainty. We have worked hard to avoid reductions to the public service and to the

programs and services we deliver to residents. Budget 2023-2024 will assist in ensuring future governments have the long-term fiscal sustainability needed to continue providing the support that residents need. Our accomplishments as a government over the course of our term, the work we continue to achieve, and the opportunities that await us in the future are all about partnerships, Mr. Speaker. Without investing the time and energy into these partnerships with the federal government, Indigenous leaders, community leaders, the business sector, and residents across the Northwest Territories, I might be standing here less optimistic about what the future holds for our territory.

Our work in this House, as Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly, is so important. We may not always agree, but we are all here to do what we think is best for the residents of the Northwest Territories and advocate on their behalf when called upon. I look forward to seeing what we achieve this sitting and over the remainder of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1314-19(2): SAFER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last several years, illicit drugs have become commonplace in many of our communities. It has taken lives through violence and overdoses and has become an ever-growing public safety concern.

Mr. Speaker, in our regional and small communities, we know who the suppliers and dealers are. We know where they are taking advantage of our most vulnerable population through buying or forcing their way into homes which are then used as a base of operation. Drugs may be manufactured, distributed, or sold from those very premises, some which are government public housing units.

No community in the NWT is spared from this activity. Community residents know where the drug houses are and want something done about it. They want those houses shut down and suppliers and dealers gone.

Mr. Speaker, often, and unfairly, we hear blame placed on the shoulders of the RCMP and enforcement services. Mr. Speaker, the RCMP must work in the confines of the law, which



include the Charter, restrictive legislation, emerging court decisions, all adding to administration backlog, lack of resources, and erosion of enforcement tools. Citizens do have rights, and those that are breaking the law know all too well what those rights are.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007, during the 15th Legislative Assembly, a piece of civil legislation referred to as the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which is commonly referred to as SCAN, was proposed by the government of the day but was never enacted. Similar legislation exists and is being used successfully in other jurisdictions.

SCAN targets residential or commercial properties identified as places where, among other illegal activities, the manufacture, sale, or use of illicit drugs is taking place. Based on tips and information from citizens, the legislation allows authorities to investigate and take appropriate action to resolve the matter, which may include informal or formal action against the occupant or a property owner. Or based on a reasonable inference, a court order is obtained to remedy the situation if the premises is being habitually used for a specified use or, again by court order, have the property closed for a set period of time. It shifts the burden of proof from that of reasonable doubt using criminal law to that based on a balance of probabilities used in civil law, that being a lower burden of proof to meet.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap when we already know what is needed. It is time we provide those frontline workers with enforcement tools that can be used to limit illegal activities that are taking advantage, harming, and killing our residents. SCAN is not the end all, it is only one such tool, but it is a start. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1315-19(2): OUTFITTERS LICENSES

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in September 2022 I was contacted by a constituent about outfitter licenses as this constituent was starting an outfitting business offering boat charters, tours, and guided fishing and hunting trips in the South Slave Region. So I e-mailed the minister of ENR asking some questions on outfitter

licenses under the wildlife business regulations, and I really did not like the answers I received.

For context, Mr. Speaker, my constituent is an Indigenous man who was born and raised in Fort Smith, and he did apply for an outfitters license, but the department denied his request. When I e-mailed the Minister asking why he was denied, the Minister said that ENR has not denied his request for a license but clarified the type, eligibility, and number of outfitting licenses available. So in essence, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is denying that his department denied my constituent an outfitters license.

While my constituent applied for an outfitting license and his application was not granted, by definition that action is a denial of that license. What's more frustrating, Mr. Speaker, is that according to the Wildlife Act and the wildlife business regulations, there is a maximum of seven outfitting licenses issued to operators who are not partnered with the local harvesting committee and a maximum of ten outfitting licenses for operators who are partnered with local harvesting committees. Plus, there's a lack of detail around the criteria for who can obtain an outfitting license and for how long they can hold them for.

Section 37(1) of the wildlife business regulation states the holder of an outfitting license is entitled to have a license issued annually for a period up to ten years. Based on that, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the outfitting licenses are basically held forever within the ten-year timeframe so long as the outfitter complies with the rules, or what happens at the end of the ten-year timeframe? How does this leave room for any new applicants to apply to be holders of an outfitters license?

The Minister did not provide me an answer to this, and the regulations do not answer that either. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---unanimous consent granted

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, one other concern I have with this is that there is no way to know or identify who the other outfitter license holders are or where they're from or based out of, nor will the Minister share that information. So for all we know, all the outfitter license holders in the NWT could be foreign citizens but there's no way for us to know that right now. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1316-19(2):  
LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH HUNTERS  
AND TRAPPERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government proposing Bill C-21 legislation directly impacts hunters and trappers in the NWT. The federal government has proposed legislation that changes how long firearms are regulated in Canada, something that our residents rely on to put food on the table, and our government has not publicly responded yet to this. What is our government saying about this bill, Mr. Speaker? What is the government's position and stance? Why is the government not standing up publicly and saying Indigenous hunters and trappers cannot be impacted with this legislation? I want to see our government make a public statement to show support on our hunters and trappers in the NWT. Traditional hunting cannot be impacted, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't appear that any engagement has happened in the NWT on this bill. Who has the federal government consulted in the NWT? What engagements have occurred with the hunters and trappers across the Northwest Territories? The GNWT should be raising a concern that there's not been any adequate engagement with Indigenous hunters and trappers in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned on this bill could cause more harm than good to our hunters and trappers, and the people across the Northwest Territories rely on hunting in feeding their families. And I will have questions for the Premier later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1317-19(2):  
FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE EXPIRATION IN  
2024

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Frank Channel Bridge has been brought up in this House many times. The previous Member for Monfwi fought hard in this House to make sure the Frank Channel Bridge received the funding it needed to move ahead.

It was discussed in this House on October 25th, 2022 that the cost of the bridge has gone up. The cost of materials has gone up, and the GNWT is awaiting a decision from the Transport Canada to cover funding. Has this funding been secured? Are we still waiting on funding to be confirmed to move forward with this project?

Mr. Speaker, we continue to have to push to make sure the Frank Channel Bridge is a priority of this government. It has been publicly discussed that the life expectancy of the Frank Channel Bridge is 2024. Mr. Speaker, it is 2023. We have 12 months to ensure that a new bridge is built and open for traffic. This is not only a bridge that is used heavily by all residents in the southern half of the NWT, such as large trucks and equipment going up to mines, transport trucks hauling food and supplies, but, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, this bridge is used every single day by the children and youth in Behchoko.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned for the safety of all the children in my community. They travel this bridge every day. Mr. Speaker, if there is an accident or a malfunction on this bridge, it is our children who are most likely to be on the bridge when it happens. The reason why the kids travel on this bridge every day is to attend Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Edzo. We need to do better for our children. We need to make them a priority. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1318-19(2):  
OPIOID/ILLICIT DRUG RELATED DEATHS

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has been paying increasing attention to the opioid crisis due to the recent upsurge in death by overdose, or as the department sanitizes it, "drug poisoning" or "opioid contamination." As already mentioned in this Chamber by my colleagues, in 2022 six opioid-related deaths were tracked in the community of Hay River.

Regular MLAs have repeatedly raised concern over the escalating drug crisis in the NWT. Crack cocaine is rampant in all of our communities, and the number of people who have lost their lives due to opioids is soaring, particularly in the community of Hay River which is known as an entry point for illicit drugs.

On January 24th, the chief public health officer; the CEO for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority; the director of Child, Family, and Community Wellness; and the NWT's chief coroner held a news conference to address the alarming "drug poisoning" deaths in Hay River in 2022. According to the Government of Canada, there have been 16 total opioid-related deaths in the NWT from 2016 and partway into 2022. And more than half of all accidental deaths included alcohol and/or drugs.

More men than women lose their lives due to drug toxicity. Nationally, data shows that men and Indigenous people are being disproportionately harmed by opioids. The five-year trend for accidental deaths with the detection of alcohol and/or drugs increases each year. 2020 was an exception, where accidental deaths that detected alcohol and/or drugs declined however that is likely due to isolation rules enforced around the pandemic.

Except for in 2018, more men than women accidentally lose their lives due to toxicity in the NWT. Those who do not identify by gender are not tracked. In other words, there is no data being collected on how drugs and opioids are impacting this marginalized community. Nationally, opioid-related deaths and hospitalizations are highest in the western provinces, the NWT, and the Yukon. Yet despite this, we have no treatment centre, no culturally-appropriate place to send the people who are suffering. Instead, we have a department that acts like a gatekeeper, often denying the most appropriate treatment for residents based on financial drivers with zero clinical basis for the decision. No wonder this issue is getting worse here in the territory, given a government that is more worried about the bottom line than its people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1319-19(2):  
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES 2023

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games officially began on Sunday, January 29th with an opening ceremony at Legacy Dodge Field at Shell Place in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Treaty 8 territory ancestral traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and Metis. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games is the first Arctic Winter Games since 2018 and is the 26th edition of the events starting in 1970 in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

According to the Arctic Winter Games website, Commissioner James Smith (Yukon), Commissioner Stuart Hodgson (Northwest Territories), and Governor Walter Hickle (Alaska) began the Arctic Winter Games in 1969 to provide a forum where athletes from the Circumpolar North could compete in their own team and their own way and on their own turf. The focus of the Arctic Winter Games is to support and promote Northerners and traditional sporting competition that strengths

culture and social interaction, increase community pride, and enhance in self-esteem.

I'm very proud to acknowledge all the athletes in the Northwest Territories, especially from the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding, that participated in the Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

From the communities of Dettah and N'dilo, we have:

- Desire Charlo, gold in hand games and bronze in the pull push;
- Gordie Liske, gold in hand games and received a fair play pin;
- Gavin Pellisey, bronze in under 19 hockey;
- Talin Sundberg, bronze in pull push;
- Airian Sundberg Koyina, gold in hand games and silver in stick pull;
- Rex Turner, bronze in basketball.

From the community of Lutselk'e:

- Joel Catholique and Ashley Catholique, bronze in volleyball male category;
- Robin Catholique, gold in hand games.

And from Fort Resolution, we have:

- Jessica Sanderson, one gold and three bronze in the Dene games category.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you to all the athletes in the Northwest Territories and in particular my riding. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1320-19(2):  
INTEROPERABILITY OF GOVERNMENT OF  
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
SYSTEMS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every session we pass a capital budget, operations and maintenance budget, or a supplemental appropriation budget for government spending. Tucked away in every one of those budgets are million dollar expenses to sustain or improve our government's hold in the digital world. Over the years, these dollars have turned paper medical records into digital archives that allow residents to access more consistent healthcare across the NWT. Some of these technology upgrades allow us to now order birth certificates or

healthcare cards online, and some, in turn, are needed to protect the privacy of this very personal information maintained by the government. But it's not enough to simply be digital. We also need the interoperability of a truly digital system.

Interoperability is when our computer systems or digital infrastructure can easily work together. High levels of interoperability create long-lasting value, accelerating growth and transformation, grow revenues, and reduce costs, free up employee work time, and propel meaningful collaboration. It's as simple as sharing draft documents no matter what community you work in or as difficult to supporting a resident's income assistance application even if you work for Housing NWT.

But today our systems are fragmented and managed in organizational silos. To fix this, we need a whole-of-government plan or framework that defines the principles, policies, guidelines, and recommendations for agencies to deliver integrated public service.

In 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, the GNWT was approved for \$23 million in computer hardware and software spending. But in the same years, the GNWT actually spent over \$41 million on computer hardware and software. Digital technology spending in the 19th Assembly seems to have come with a blank cheque, Mr. Speaker.

We need to collect data. This data needs to be accessible for the programs and services that rely on it to grow, improve, and address the needs of NWT residents. So when I see spending that far exceeds the budgeted amounts, but I'm told that the silos are difficult to break down to properly serve residents because of the "in"-interoperability of our digital systems, I get frustrated, Mr. Speaker.

Where shifting to electronic medical records once made the Northwest Territories digital leaders in Canada, we have now fallen behind, and it hasn't been for lack of spending. There is much to be gained by a digital government. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is much to be gained by a digital government. Improved resident experience, increased administrative efficiency, improved data-driven policy making, a more transparent government through open data, enhanced privacy, and of course waste reduction. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1321-19(2):  
EMERGENCY SERVICES IN THE  
COMMUNITIES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was an incident of an elderly person who collapsed which caused shock and distress for the people around the person. First, let me take you back a spell to the days when the nurses and the RCMP members to distress incidents within the community. They did not even bat an eye to attend to distress calls, especially within the community, as people were not knowledgeable or were in shock to handle the situation.

Now, getting back to the recent incident, the people called the nurse and the nurse replied they were not allowed to attend to distress calls out in the community. So the people called the RCMP and were directed to a dispatch person, perhaps in Yellowknife. They indicated the RCMP members do not attend to these types of distress calls.

Mr. Speaker, this was a shocker to the people calling in as they were in shock and couldn't believe what they were hearing. We know the RCMP show up to crime scenes, vehicle accidents, and a host of other incidents, even to check on people under probation orders. But no, this distress call was ignored.

Mr. Speaker, the collapsed elderly person did eventually regain consciousness and was rushed to the health centre but the nurse who answered the call, and stated would be at the health centre, was not there. The nurse showed up a little later.

Mr. Speaker, this is very concerning to us in small communities when people, most relied upon to assist us as part of their jobs, do not want to do anything with going out in the community. I will begin to address this issue starting with the Department of Health and Social Services. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1322-19(2):  
ELECTRIC BIKES

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In last year's budget address, the Minister of Finance said it wasn't about flashy announcements but yesterday in giving her budget address, she forgot the flashy

announcement, Mr. Speaker, and that is, you know, something that makes up .0002 percent of the budget, because buried deep in here is an Electric Bike Rebate Program, Mr. Speaker. And I am very excited for that flashy announcement.

I think electric bikes are great, Mr. Speaker. Studies show that those who switch to an electric bike from a normal bike actually get more exercise. They ride more times per day, per week, and per year. They extend their season. Studies show that if you get an electric bike in your household, you take less car trips and you save on gas. It saves you some money and gets you some exercise. What's not to like about them? But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to get electric bikes into all our communities without a little help and that's where this rebate program comes in. So I'll have some questions for the Minister of Infrastructure about when we're going to roll this out and how much it's going to be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1323-19(2):  
FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My Member's statement is about Francophone education in the Northwest Territories, and I'll deliver it in French so people may want to change to the right channel there. [Translation unavailable]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Sorry, Members, our interpretation isn't working all the best today but I'm sure we'll get it fixed right away. Thanks.

Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Oh sorry, as I mentioned, our interpretation isn't working. So the Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. O'REILLY:** [Translation unavailable].

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1324-19(2):  
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES 2023

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to thank the Minister of MACA and his staff for the invite

to attend the Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to compare to it as this was my first time attending the games, and I would have to say the Wood Buffalo host society did a great job hosting this event.

The heart of the games took place at the Fort McMurray Suncor Community Leisure Centre where this is where I was able to cheer on two of the NWT curling teams, both of whom are from Inuvik. I watched some very fast hockey, Arctic sports, Dene games, as well as the opening ceremonies took place there.

The games were spread out over the Wood Buffalo region so transportation was a very big part of the host's society, and I think they got it kind of organized after the first couple of days of transporting over 2,000 participants, coaches, and mission staff. I was able to travel north 40 minutes to Fort McKay to take in the speed skating as well as different rinks and gymnasiums throughout Fort McMurray. I was able to watch basketball and even more hockey. Fort McKay was a small community north, and I learned from one of the members they're a Metis community and so you could see it as you drove in there that, like, everything had all -- the poles and everything had their Metis emblem and everything there so it was a very proud Indigenous community. Unfortunately, I was unable to travel 40 minutes south to Anzac where I would have liked to take in badminton and figure skating, which is a big part of my child's sports growing up.

Mr. Speaker, it was also really nice to see the participants competing, socializing, meeting new friends from all seven regions after a five-year hiatus. And let's not forget the pin trading, which the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories and I learned very quickly how important this was to the games.

NWT received 106 medals in total, and I would like to thank and congratulate the participants, especially the Inuvik Twin Lake participants, coaches, and admission staff. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to seek unanimous consent just to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues. I just wanted to name the Inuvik participants because, you know, to get there they have to compete against a lot of different students. So,

- Olivia Amos, a participant of badminton;
- Tyler Gordon Barb, a participant, ice hockey U19 male;

- Talley Banksland Stefure, participant, ice hockey U19 male;
- Kiara MacDonald, participant, ice hockey female;
- Mohammed Matada, participant, volleyball;
- Caleb Piechuk, participant, short track speed skating;
- Jacob Robertson, participant, curling;
- Charlie Snowshoe, participant, biathlon snowshoe;
- John Amos, he was the coach of snow showing;
- Mark Robertson, the coach of the curling, the male; and
- Nick Saturino, coach of the curling female.
- And as well as admission staff from my constituency, Wanda MacDonald.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1325-19(2):  
EULOGY FOR DAVID HORESAY

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Ria Letcher for allowing me to share the eulogy of her late Uncle Gohcheah.

David Angus Horesay was born to Frank and Margaret Horesay on December 31, 1942. Our brother, uncle and friend, is now part of a generation that preceded us and have taken with them their wisdom, kindness and love.

David was a patient, kind, and humble man who lived life simple but full and to his own aspirations. He lived his life like a Sinatra song "his way," or George Jones, "I don't need no rocking chair." He defied his age and lived by his own creed and was not to be told what to do as the family learnt in his final moments. While they wanted him to see the doctor, he had other plans and many old friends to see. He maintained his independence and dignity to the end. He missed his friends and family dearly and longed after them in the final months of his time. His family knew he is now amongst them happily smiling and laughing.

Some of his most notable achievements were when he was the chief of Pehdzeh Ki First Nation and travelled with the Indian

Brotherhood representing the community. He would often talk about his visit to Old Crow and the Gwich'in Nation.

He remained interested in politics of the community for his lifetime and attended the band office regularly. This is where he would obtain employment intermittently as and when needed, and he always could be called upon in time of need.

David was a fantastic carpenter who built many cabins and survival shelters on the land. His handiwork from the projects he worked will be seen in the community and surrounding lands for many years to come.

He was an amazing hunter, trapper, and an incredible big brother to his little brother Archie and his sisters, all of whom he loved dearly. Together, the brothers travelled and hunted on Pehdzeh Ki Deh, "their childhood playground." Together they were incredible harvesters and well known through the Denendeh for their skills and knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, Ria told me "Uncle David" has impacted her life tremendously and she is forever grateful to him for his contributions for her upbringing. For her, it was beautiful, and she had so much to be thankful for.

Mr. Speaker, David loved to laugh and have fun. People will never forget his smile and Dene sense of humour. He enjoyed the lighter side of life, the company of family and friends, the love of a woman, and the sweet sound of music. He enjoyed all his favorites and would often be sitting by the stereo and just playing records back in the day before TV, 8-tracks, cassettes, CDs, MP3s and iTunes. He loved music. He had a musical soul and often drummed some of the best drum dances Ria ever recalled as a child growing up in Wrigley. These were the days when they used to dance to the sun-up. He also supported and strengthened many a hand games with his calling and drumming. He will be sadly missed by us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and welcome Corinne Nitsiza, originally from Whati. She's here in the gallery with her two granddaughters,

Justice and Presley. Corinne is a long-term Tlicho interpreter as well. So therefore I would like to welcome them in the gallery. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to raise and recognize two of our pages here, Isabell Moses and Michael Pellissey Junior. Thanks, too, to Priscilla and Darcey Moses who are their chaperones that brought them here, as well as our interpreter Mary Jane Cazon. Thank you very much for the work you do with us here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery. Mahsi.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think his MLA can see him, but I'd also like to recognize Dave Brothers who is up there. I've known him for a long time. He's here as a happy grandparent, I think, today, and also Corinne Nitsiza is also a very talented beader and I think a couple of us own some very gorgeous earrings by her. So it's always nice to get to have the artist in the House too. So thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Replies to the budget address. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 1328-19(2): SAFER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I'll table a document, being a bill that was prepared in the 15th Legislative Assembly but not enacted. Mr. Speaker, that bill is the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. With some minor revisions, the enactment of this draft bill, we could provide enforcement with the tool to help addressing the manufacturing and sale of illicit drugs. The legislation's already present and working in Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice confirm what enforcement tools are we using in the NWT to shut down known drug houses throughout the territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So right now the tools that are being used are the tools that are the RCMP's disposal - their ability to do investigations, to get search warrants, and the like. So what we don't have access to are a lot of the tools that other jurisdictions do, that are not criminal law but civil law tools, like the SCAN legislation that the Member is talking about. So unfortunately right now we have a limited set of tools in the territory. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that answer. I think it's important that we look at expanding the tools that we do have, and if that means going and looking at civil legislation then that's what we should be doing.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm why we'd want to look at civil legislation to deal with those drug houses? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Over the last number of years, the tools that the RCMP have traditionally used have been eroded by changes to the Criminal Code, by Supreme Court decisions, so the reason to look at civil legislation is so that we can do our part to support the RCMP in addressing some of those issues. Civil legislation, it's much different than the criminal legislation. It doesn't need to be enforced by RCMP officers. It uses a balance of probabilities as opposed to proof beyond a reasonable doubt. So there's a number of benefits to using civil legislation, and it just expands the toolbox that the law enforcement has access to. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it sounds like maybe we should be enacting this piece of legislation. It didn't happen in the 15th Assembly, but the difference now is that we have a lot of people dying because of drugs.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit his department to undertake and complete a jurisdictional scan and review of the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act used in other jurisdictions? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we're at the tail end of this Assembly. We have maybe six months left where we can actually get things done. Right now, the

Department of Justice is working on the policies and legislation that we've been working on for a number of years and trying to wrap that up. So as of today, there isn't the capacity to go about and do that; however, times have changed. We're seeing new drugs. We're seeing new types of criminals in the territory. We're seeing a lot of interest from criminal organizations outside of the territory in the Northwest Territories. So we have to change as well. So it's imperative that we look at these pieces of legislation. I think we have a moral obligation to do so, to do what we can to stop these deaths and the devastation that drugs are causing in the community.

So while I can't commit to the work that would be involved in looking at this piece of legislation and doing all of that work, because it is a significant amount of work, I have spoken with the department, and I've let them know that we need to put our minds to this. We don't have a crime reduction unit in the Department of Justice, but that doesn't mean we can't look at more of these initiatives. We do have a number of initiatives, community safety officers, things like this, but it's clear that we need some more tools.

So this has been the focus of a number of discussions I've had with the department. This piece of -- the SCAN legislation is one piece. There is more communication -- other pieces could include more communication between the RCMP and the Minister, other types of civil legislation, more support from municipalities. So all of these things are on the table, and I've asked the department to turn their mind to it and figure out how we are going to respond, because we can't continue to do the same thing. There needs to be action on this, and we can start now. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Hay River residents, and NWT residents, do not want to attend more funerals. What we want is the enforcement tools to hit those who are manufacturing and selling out of public housing units, out of private housing, and out of commercial properties. I know the Minister has already alluded to this next question but, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to review this draft SCAN bill and consider it for the NWT before the end of this Assembly? We have to do something and doing nothing just isn't acceptable. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So personally I have reviewed the draft bill. It's very similar to other bills across the country - the Member named a number of

jurisdictions that have this. And as I've already stated, I won't repeat myself, but we are turning our minds to this. We know we have to do something, and we need to take action. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 1329-19(2):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES POSITION ON FEDERAL  
BILL C-21

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the first time I heard my Minister speak about Bill C-21 here in the House in regards to long gun firearms legislation that's trying to go through in Ottawa. What's the GNWT's position on this bill? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to defer that to the Minister of Justice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister responsible for Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when Bill C-21 was introduced, there wasn't a lot of controversy around it. I mean, it is a bill that's banning certain firearms, but the real controversy was the amendment that the government put forward in November that would prohibit a number of firearms that are used by hunters in the Northwest Territories. As I've stated in this House, we are not in support of those amendments. I had a conversation with the Minister of public safety on Tuesday, and I explained to him the history of the Northwest Territories. You know, the fact that in the Northwest Territories, there are more hunters on average in the population, and I would guess that our hunters are hunting a lot more than most parts of Canada. So these are very, very important tools to the people of Northwest Territories, and we are not in support of removing those tools from the hands of the hunters and residents of the territory. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. I'm really happy to hear that. Will the Minister, the Government of the Northwest Territories, clearly, make the federal government on long-term firearms will negatively impact our Indigenous people and territory.



Will the Minister go public and start having meetings across the territory with our hunters and trappers and the people across the territory, because we haven't heard a thing since this Bill C-21 came out, and like I said, it's the first time I heard it yesterday. We have to let people know what's happening, to work together. And did the Minister also talk to the Yukon government and to Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when I spoke to the Minister, I said that there needs to be consultation; people need to come to the territory and they need to talk to people on the ground, not just to us and Indigenous governments, but to the hunters, the residents, who are going to be impacted by this. So I have made that strong recommendation to the Minister.

First, the Department of Justice of the Northwest Territories is not going to go out and do consultation on a federal bill. That's the fed's job. But I think that they got the message. They're aware of the push back; that's why they removed the amendments. I haven't spoken directly with the Ministers from the Yukon and Nunavut but I'm aware of their position, and their position is the same as our position. They don't want to see their hunters disadvantaged in this way either. Thank you.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Bill C-21, was ever the Northwest Territories government offered to see what any comments on this bill before the federal government went forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to double check with the department but we -- definitely, there was no consultation on the amendments that are really the cause of the controversy here. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 1330-19(2):  
OUTFITTER LICENSING REGULATIONS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of ENR explain what happens with outfitter license holders at the end of the ten-year timeframe that they are entitled to hold their license? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the wildlife business regulations, the ten-year period restarts after every year the outfitter has renewed their license and is compliant with the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, are outfitter license holders able to hold on to their outfitting license indefinitely as long as they follow the rules, or is there an opportunity every ten years for new applicants to apply to become holders of outfitter licenses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member's statement actually had all the correct information. So there are a maximum of seven outfitter licenses available to operators who are not partnered with the local harvesting committees. There's a maximum of ten licenses -- outfitting licenses for operators partnering with local harvesters. So when the maximum number of outfitters have been reached, a new license can only be issued if their license expires. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether a non-NWT resident can obtain an outfitting license in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no residential requirements to hold outfitter licenses so a non-NWT resident can obtain outfitters licenses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, in the event that an outfitter license does not become available, how does ENR notify the public and interested applicants of that availability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process is made public. As soon as the license is available, we put it out publicly. We also reach out to interested parties that have expressed interest in doing that. So we reach out to them, explain that it's happening, and then there's guidance on how a license can be applied for publicly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1331-19(2):  
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement earlier, I left out two names by accident. I just want to go on to recognize Bridget Mackay and Kinesha Norn,

who also had gold in the hand games and Dene games category. I just want to acknowledge them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. I take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1332-19(2):  
FIRST RESPONDERS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services related to my Member's statement.

I'd like to know from the Minister the reasons why the health centre staff in the small communities are not allowed to attend to distress calls within the community and if there's a policy, what are the reasons for them? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The reasons the nurses don't leave the health centre is they are prohibited from doing so by policy. The emergency first responders who attend to immediate problems - car crashes, people fainting, and so on - they are specifically trained as first responders and they have the appropriate equipment, including transportation, to respond to the situation. So there are four communities in the NWT where municipalities provide that service but, unfortunately, this does not happen in the small communities. And I realize that that is less than ideal, especially when you have a very concerning case like the one the Member mentioned. Thank you.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi to the Minister for the answer. Yes, our community, we don't have no ambulance services, but I know the health centre has a van and a bunch of other vehicles. Apparently, there's no first responders in most small communities, and that's the challenge we have. The only people we have close to that, that don't attend to these kinds of calls, are the volunteer fire department as they only attend to anything related to fire.

I am wondering if the Minister could commit to working with other departments, probably a whole of Cabinet initiative, to look at training first responders for small communities? Mahsi.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is generally the fire departments

who also take care of the emergency responder calls, and there is training available through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. It was being done online during the COVID time, but I think it's gone back to in-person training now. So I would encourage the Member to connect with my colleague, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, for more information. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1333-19(2):  
INTEROPERABILITY OF GOVERNMENT OF  
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
SYSTEMS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, why has the GNWT overspent its computer hardware and software budget for every year during the 19th Assembly, and how does the GNWT intend to more accurately budget its digital infrastructure spending? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's observation. There certainly are budget lines that go department by department, which can make it difficult perhaps to look at it from a corporate perspective. I am, however, happy to say the Department of Finance is now putting in practice a way to better review and report on those specific items, computer hardware and software. That should make it easier to look at this from a government-wide perspective and ensure that we are obviously controlling those costs but also better servicing the public through having better control over what products we have and making sure the departments have what they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the department is taking note and putting in better controls to look at the spending on digital infrastructure. And just to be clear, I'm not opposed to digital infrastructure. I want to be clear as to what my interest is in this. Since the very beginning, I've been asking about integrated service delivery of the public service, and this is one of the barriers to being able to do that properly.

So given the great need for interoperability to properly serve NWT residents, does the NWT

intend to create an interoperability framework?  
Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member must be reading my social media. I had the opportunity to attend an FPT recently where I think my lead word was "interoperability." It is something that, quite frankly, doesn't sound very exciting, not the sort of thing that gets somebody's political blood boiling, but is quite critical to the functioning of the services from the IT perspective and one that we need to do a better job of, Mr. Speaker. There's really no way around that. So I'm pleased to have some attention here. It's been brought to my attention by my officials that lack of attention, lack of awareness and understanding of what it is, of what this is, that doesn't give it the attention and therefore the clout that it needs. So happy to speak to this and happy to also say, in light of that, Mr. Speaker, we are putting forward, through the Office of the Chief Information Officer, a framework this fiscal year, and that will give guidance to get to a place where we can say that we have proper interoperability with that framework in place to provide the kinds of policies, programs, guidelines - that corporate structure that is required for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, a good message to all Ministers, I am watching your social media very closely.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering how this framework will help reduce silos and how will it be ensured that departments are coordinating in their software and hardware purchases? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in many ways this is the culmination of why ISSS was created in the first place under the last administration and now is coming more and more to its fruition. Again, I know we've said this more times than I would like to count, COVID was not a help in this particular regard. It was certainly a big draw on this particular division to pause some of the transitions required during COVID. But now turning back to what should be regular business, the chief information office does create a business partner approach with departments. This is meant to have that cross-jurisdictional committee effort, bringing departments and representatives from departments in, to be able to discuss and look at what are the IT needs, not dissimilar to how it happens over on the capital planning side where ADMs from all departments come together to work on these requests. Now we'll

be doing that on the IT side better as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the government is doing is currently evaluating all of the redundancies and efficiencies of its programs and services through government renewal. And so I'm wondering if ISSS itself is involved in its own government renewal process focused on the interoperability of GNWT digital infrastructure and redundancy reduction between GNWT departments. Right now there is a lot of silos happening, there's a lot of fragmented digital systems, there's a lot of purchasing that's happening individually within departments, and so I'm wondering if they're doing kind of their own capture of inventory of systems throughout the government and evaluating how to bring those together? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, very timely. This is something that I think a lot of the provinces and territories are becoming very aware of and the importance of. It's a table that provinces and territories sit at together as a symposium because it's an issue that doesn't necessarily get the attention until something goes wrong. So very happy to be able to speak to it now, to give it that kind of attention it deserves in advance so we can try to be more proactive going forward. As I've said, Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Chief Information Officer at the helm of Information Shared System Services is now in a position to start to put those pieces together, to develop this kind of framework. We're not outside the government renewal process. ISSS is part of government renewal just as is every other division, and they've gone through the process of having their inventory done and can now get down to the work of ensuring that they are providing a framework for all of government to improve the IT services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1334-19(2):  
ELECTRIC BIKES SUPPORT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to find a specific budget line for Ebikes buried in the two and a half billion dollars so I was hoping the Minister of Infrastructure could tell us what is the total budget for this rebate program? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so excited the Member's all charged up for this project.

Under the 2022-2023 Energy Action Plan, the GNWT plans to allocate some funds for the 2023-2024, for a pilot program, which is aimed at increasing the adoption of Ebikes and also mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions which means this is new money pending approvals during this session. It will be provided through Arctic Energy Alliance. Mr. Speaker, the program will be administered by Arctic Energy Alliance, and application criteria and details are yet to be finalized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** So I'm getting some funds sometime, Mr. Speaker; I was hoping for a little more detail. I guess, does the Minister have any more information of when and how someone will be able to apply for this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Arctic Energy Alliance, the organization which will be delivering the program, is currently outlining the details, including the application criteria, the rebate amount, so this information will be finalized, publicly available, in advance of the April 1st, 2023 launch of this program. It's also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that this is a pilot program, which is aimed at better understanding both the public interest as well as impact on helping towards greenhouse gas emissions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1335-19(2):  
FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether all funding that is required for the bridge has been secured? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is speaking specifically for Frank Channel Bridge. In December, Cabinet, most of Cabinet, were down in Ottawa having discussions on some projects. You know, we've had very positive discussions with Transport Canada. So pending approval for funding approvals, permit applications, then this project will be submitted,

with the construction commencing once these authorizations are received. So, yes, we did receive initial funding. It's not enough. Like many projects here in the territories, we've gone back and asked for more. So we are hoping to get some positive response from that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a liability issue. So what is going to happen after 2023-2024? That's why I asked that question.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell this House when will the Frank Channel Bridge be replaced? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned that we are looking for funding -- cost escalations on the bridge. Once we get that, we have discussions with Tlicho government to be able to work with us in partner to be able to get this bridge done. I wish I could put a set date when this will be completed or started. Right now we're pending approvals for funding. Once we get that, we know it's a priority. We know it's something that we need to get done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, this bridge, Frank Channel Bridge, is important for all of us, for all the Northwest Territories as mentioned. So I want to ask the Minister when was the last structural assessment completed on the Frank Channel Bridge? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is something that we are looking at. You know, the Member talked about public safety on the bridge. There are a number of things that we could do as a precaution and perhaps impose things like weight limits, additional inspections, rumble strips, perhaps more signage. These are a number of things that we can do to mitigate some of the risks on that bridge. But in terms of when the last inspection, I'd have to get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is the same answer for a year. So what is the plan if there is no money? What if the federal government says there is no money, so what is the plan after this?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, as I mentioned, when we were in Ottawa we had some really good discussions for the Frank Channel Bridge

in speaking with the transport Minister. As for the plans, right now we're looking at getting costs escalations for the project. And if we don't get that then perhaps that we need to come back to Cabinet. That's the only alternative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1336-19(2):  
DIGITAL INTEGRATED INFORMATION  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a set of questions here that I'd like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure today.

My first question is in regards to the DIMS system that the GNWT uses to house all of its documents. And I'm wondering why is DIMS housed within the Department of Infrastructure and not within the Department of Finance where the Office of the Chief Information Officer sits? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the enterprise information management division is responsible for the record management, and DIMS is the platform that is used. There is a specialized required for the records management hence that's why it's sitting in Infrastructure. The EIM has strong working relationship related to the governance with the chief information officer and the Department of Finance. So the CIO has delegated responsibility for information management from the Financial Admin Act to the enterprise information management. So EIM develops policies and provides advice and assistance due to the expertise around records management.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government-wide program which is focused on managing information, assets, and government DIMS. Manages both the electronic and the physical records as well that the GNWT centre holds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I, once upon a time, used to work at the Department of Finance, I had the privilege of using DIMS. I adored DIMS. It makes it easier to find documents and store them and share them with your colleagues. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering what departments still need to be loaded on to the DIMS system in order to

access it as part of their regular workspace? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you'll be happy to know that as of January 2022, the Education, Culture and Employment has begun the rollout, and we're working with Health and Social Services to be able to assist them in implementing the DIMS program. So Health and Social Services are looking at migrating two of their divisions as a starting point. So, I mean, this is great. We're starting to move all of our different departments into one integrated system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's another reason why DIMS is really important, and it's for access to information and privacy protection as well. And the ATIPP Act is also rolled into kind of being able to use that system as well. And so especially given that, you know, digital technology changes so quickly and the need for us to keep up is so relevant in today's day and age. I'm wondering what is the actual timeline for all departments to be absolutely on DIMS, integrated into it, given that I believe it's coming up four or five years since I had the privilege of sitting as a public servant in the Department of Finance? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned, Education, Culture and Employment is planning deployment in 2023 for four more divisions. So we'll work with them to see what additional supports we can provide through Infrastructure to help the other divisions as well. And I mentioned Health and Social Services has indicated two more divisions that could go forward. But we'll need to see how else we can support them to get to the other units that we need to combine as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is it reasonable to expect for this to be done before the end of the 19th Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** No, but I want to say that the department can sometimes be challenged with being able to dedicate some time, our resource to implement DIMS. You know, as the Member knows, the two biggest departments - Department of Health and Education, Culture and Employment - are two big departments that we need to implement into the whole of a DIMS program. So ECE has begun staging the deployment since January,

and it's based on some of the readiness and the approval of their operational classification systems. Health and Social Services, as I mentioned, we're getting closer. I just -- no, I don't think we're going to get there by the end of this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To get this done right, that's what it takes. Thanks.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1337-19(2):  
FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on Francophone education in the NWT. And probably to the Minister's and my own relief, I am going to be doing them in English.

So Ecole Allain St-Cyr in Yellowknife is at 90 percent capacity with a trend of increasing enrolment fueled by GNWT supported immigration and retention of students. Can the Minister tell us what triggers planning for a new or expanded school and whether discussions have started with the Commission Scolaire Francophone Territories du Nord-Ouest? Merci, Monsieur le President.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in a way, these are champagne problems as they say. We have been working on increasing immigration and so we've seen those numbers go up. As well earlier in this government, we introduced some more liberal regulations, expanding access to French first language education to non-rights holders so this is sort of a situation of our own making. And in terms of the conversations about facilities for CSFTNO, I wouldn't say they've started, I would say they've never ended. They've been ongoing for many, many years.

The way that our process works is that each year school boards provide ECE with their requested capital projects. Sometimes it is something small, like blinds for classrooms, and sometimes it is a school. And so we started having those discussions this year with the CSFTNO. And I think that both us and the school board have been waiting on those census numbers to indicate how many rights holders there are in the territory so that we can have an informed discussion.

I will say that I have spoken to students at Ecole Boreale in Hay River. They asked me about a gym, and I wish I had better news for them but the fact is it is difficult to get new infrastructure.

We have school standards and when we build new infrastructure or we renovate, we do it according to those standards. But in the territory, we have 49 schools and we look at each of those schools. They're assessed by the Department of Infrastructure, and they're assigned a rating based on their condition. Unfortunately for Ecole Boreale -- or sorry, maybe I'll just leave it at that. I'm sort of getting off track here, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that because he's of course getting into my second question. The problems in Hay River are different and, in some ways, very similar, though, to what Yellowknife was like before the expansion of Ecole Allain St-Cyr. Ecole Boreale has been forced to keep its senior students in a portable for 13 years. Count it - 13 years. And there are continuing issues with heating, water, and sewer services. The students also need to compete for gym time with the nearby public school.

Can the Minister tell us what he is going to do with regard to Francophone senior students in giving them a permanent home and a real gym for Ecole Boreale? Merci, Monsieur le President.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And those portables, they are old. I believe they were supposed to be in place for two or three years but here we are 13 years later. And we have had issues with them. There's ongoing maintenance issues that we've been dealing with. So we would all love to see those replaced. Unfortunately, like I said, we have 49 schools. Many of them are in worse condition than the facilities in Hay River. And so it's difficult to make a case to, you know, renovate or build new facilities to replace facilities that are in better shape than other facilities around the territory.

So I'm afraid it's not the best news. But there are joint use agreements between the Hay River DEA and the CSFTNO that speak to the use of gyms. And it is definitely not an ideal situation. I wish we had a gym for Ecole Boreale but we are doing the best we can. I think that if the community was open to looking at school swaps, that might be an option, but that is a difficult topic to broach in Hay River. And at some point, we may get to the point where we really need to start looking at those types of angles. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. And I've got some of the numbers that he was talking about here. As I understand it, there are 840 students in Yellowknife and 135 in Hay River that are

rights holders for French first language education. And that doesn't include immigrants, other non-rights holders that are already in the system, and of course there's caps on all of that. But if all these students and their parents exercised their constitutionally-protected rights, we'd be in real trouble in terms of meeting their educational needs given current facilities.

So can the Minister explain what he's going to do -- what plan is there for this contingency if everybody exercised their rights and especially given that we've got some out of date and unnecessary enrolment caps? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, I thought I had dealt with this issue a few years ago. I spent a lot of time personally meeting with the chair of the CSFTNO about the regulations. And we settled on some updated regulations that, you know, are by no means perfect but seemed to address a lot of the outstanding issues that we were facing, both the school board and the GNWT. Since we recently received those census numbers, we can now look at how to move forward in terms of the regulations, the capacity, and all of those types of questions. We have not had time to do that given how recently those census numbers came out and everything else that's going on. But that will be the starting-point for any future conversations. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. And I do want to acknowledge that this Minister has taken a constructive approach with CSFTNO, from everything I've heard so I want to give him credit for that. And I understand now that we've got these census numbers, which is good, but I can't even count or remember the number of times GNWT's been taken to court and lost over Francophone education rights in the NWT over the last 15 years.

So can the Minister tell us how he intends to keep GNWT out of courts over constitutionally-protected Francophone education rights? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish I could say that we would never go to court again, but I think every jurisdiction in Canada is engaged in ongoing court cases with their respective French first language education bodies. I made attempts with the regulations. I admitted the students that were at the centre of the last court case. And I will say that we actually did win that on appeal. But it's a difficult subject. I understand where the school board is

coming from. They want to protect their rights. They want to advocate for their students. And there's French first language school boards across the country that want to do the same, and I believe they all work together and support each other. So sometimes I feel as though perhaps the issue is more of what's happening nationally than in the territory that causes us to go to court but regardless, I believe we are in a good place. We have good relationships with the French first language school board and no matter what happens in terms of court cases, I want to ensure that we do our best to maintain those good relationships. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 1338-19(2):  
OUTFITTER BUSINESS LICENSES

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the ENR Minister. There are no clauses in the wildlife business regulations citing confidentiality requirements for outfitter licenses.

Can the Minister explain this rationale and identify where the department is bound by confidentiality on this matter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have told the Member in the email, it's a privacy issue. We reached out to Justice and we got the information that way. So we can't be sharing that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, has the Department of ENR ever suspended an outfitting license because of inactivity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For that detail, I'll have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain what ENR's rationale is with issuing an outfitters license to a local harvesting committee but not issue the license directly to an Indigenous NWT resident? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's seven licenses and then there's ten. So there's seven licenses we give out, then the local harvesting committee there's ten. So they can reach out to

the local harvesting committee and get the license -- or apply through it that way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit that ENR will examine the wildlife business regulations and provide more clarity around the areas I've identified today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. Mr. Speaker, we've been looking at this. We look at it all the time. So are we going to spend a lot of time going through the regulations that we've already developed and looked at? No. We have other issues that we got to deal with right now. But thanks to the Member bringing it toward. We have been looking at this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1339-19(2):  
FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the Infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, if there are plans around costs and construction, why haven't they been provided to the Regular MLAs, and can the Minister commit to sharing them with us? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department originally applied for the Frank Channel Bridge, I want to say about \$40 million, and now we've gone back to the feds asking for additional 15. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, can we have the cost and detail. Can we have the detail as to the cost of the construction instead of just telling us so then we have a better understanding of what's delaying this Frank Channel Bridge. It's affecting everybody in my region so that's why I just want to have the detail.

But another question that I have, Mr. Speaker, thank you -- I hope she will answer that too as well. Can the Minister describe the structure, the integrity of the Frank Channel Bridge? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Frank Channel Bridge is a critical piece of the national highway system, which is maintaining the north/south

trade to ensure we have safe, reliable transportation between the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the details on the funding have yet to be determined. I don't know if we, as a government, share all the details on all our costs. It defeats the purpose of having some of the procurement progress on these projects so I don't believe we can share all the details. I can find out and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I did ask the Minister for an update previously, and I didn't get the answer yet but it would be nice.

Will the Minister commit to provide me with an update on the condition of the Frank Channel Bridge and the financial aspect too? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our bridge, we review them annually. You know, in terms of the condition of it, if we're able to share it absolutely. This is information that the Member should know as it pertains to her riding. So if we're able to share some of the details on the review of the bridge, absolutely. And I forget her other question. But that's -- I'll answer that one for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next time the Minister comes to inspect the bridge with their engineer, can they invite the Regular MLAs -- some of the Regular MLAs and the local leaders as well? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a great idea. I mean, we're looking at replacing the bridge and to be able to see the conditions of the existing bridge. I'm not sure when the annual inspections for the bridge are. I want to say in the summer. We go out and inspect the bridges across the Territories to ensure that they're safe. And I think the Frank Channel Bridge, if Members and leaders want to come and inspect with the department, then we can see what we can do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 56-19(2):  
MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GAP



**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've asked this as a written question before and didn't get an answer, but I think the Minister's going to answer it this time.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Everyone has acknowledged that there is a municipal infrastructure gap; however, the most recent numbers that are publicly available on the size of that gap are from 2014. My question is, can the Minister provide an updated analysis of the municipal infrastructure gap, and the year in which it was completed, as follows:

1. What is the current gap by community;
2. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it relates to operations and maintenance funding;
3. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it applies to water and sewer funding, or as it is now called, environmental funding; and.
4. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it applies to capital funding, or as it is now called, CPI and Gas Tax.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Written questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

WRITTEN QUESTION 57-19(2):  
PAYMENTS FOR LEASED SPACE

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've also asked these ones and didn't get an answer but I'm feeling lucky.

Payments for leased space:

The Government of the Northwest Territories is one of the largest tenants in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister provide lease fees paid by the Government of the Northwest Territories to the following companies, broken down by individual lease and building space, for the last ten years as follows:

1. All lease payments made to Northview Canadian High Yield Residential Fund (Northview) and its predecessor companies, broken down both by residential leases and commercial leases per year;
2. All lease payments made to KingSett Capital, which is the co-owner of Northview Canadian High Yield Residential Fund, for the last ten years and broken down by residential and commercial leases per year;

3. The total of future lease commitments to the above companies and the expiration date of each of those leases;
4. A clear breakdown of how each of the leases were tendered and in what year they went out for public competition, if at all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 821-19(2):  
AURORA COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Aurora College Annual Report 2021-2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tabling of documents. Member for Hay River South.

TABLED DOCUMENT 822-19(2):  
BILL 7-15(6): SAFER COMMUNITIES AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a copy of Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, from the sixth session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, and 62, Committee Report 39-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), Tabled Document 813-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. The committee wishes to deal with Bill 62 and Committee Report 39-19(2). Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We'll take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. I will ask the Minister of Finance to introduce the bill.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am here to present Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2.

The main purpose of Bill 62 is to make various legislative retroactive housekeeping measures to the territorial income tax legislation to comply with the Canada-Northwest Territories Tax Collection Agreement. These amendments keep territorial legislation current and harmonized with the federal income tax legislation. Specifically, the proposed changes include:

- Remove a reference to a repealed federal provision about an option for trusts to pay tax;
- Exclude a reference to the federal COVID-19 relief measures for an additional GST/HST payment;
- Exclude a reference to the federal temporary wage subsidy under COVID-19 relief measures;
- Include special federal rules for determining the Northwest Territories Child Benefit as part of COVID-19 relief measures;
- Include a reference to the federal special rule for the disability supports deduction as part of COVID-19 relief measures;
- Align the Northwest Territories Act with the federal administrative rules in compliance with the Canada-Northwest Territories Tax Collection Agreement;
- Include a reference to federal rules on evidence for notices sent to persons in compliance with the Canada-Northwest Territories Tax Collection Agreement;

- Include a reference to federal provisions relating to certain allowed or disallowed deductions in the calculation of the federal foreign tax credit; and,
- Remove ambiguity in certain terms relating to tax on split income for multi-jurisdictional tax filers.

Bill 62 also includes an amendment to allow the Canada Revenue Agency to share Northwest Territories-specific taxpayer data with Finance Canada. Sharing this data with Finance Canada assists in designing tax policy, and it benefits the GNWT as it allows Finance Canada to provide a more detailed analysis of the implications of federal tax measures on the territorial tax system. The Canada Revenue Agency has a number of stringent security agreements in place to safeguard Northwest Territories taxpayer data from being used inappropriately. That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Thank you. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on my right I have Kelly Bluck, who is director of fiscal policy within the Department of Finance, and on my left I have Christina Duffy, who is legislative director.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, and welcome. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comments on Bill 62. MLA Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 2nd, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

On January 18th, 2023, the standing committee held a public hearing and completed its clause by clause review with the Minister of Finance I believe. The committee received no submissions on this bill. I thank the committee for reviewing this legislation. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 62. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Who could have thought tax bills would be so exciting? But the committee report raises a few questions for me, and I did have the privilege of sitting in and listening to the review of the bill. There was some amendments made to the bill, and some of this, the provisions now, are being made retroactive to like more than five years ago. And I just had wondered why these changes were going back five years in time. Was there some delay on our part in getting some of this implemented? And I think the Minister said that that was not the case. But the report also says that the Minister was going to try to find details of which she would try to find and provide separately to committee. I'm not aware that that actually happened. So was the Minister and her staff actually able to see why these delays in implementation took place? Thanks, Madam Chair.

Sorry, and if I could add. I just wanted to get the Minister to reconfirm that none of these delays were our fault as a government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do remember that exchange, Madam Chair, and I apologize if we didn't include that on any correspondence to committee. I did just confirm again now with the Department of Finance, as I had at the time, that, indeed, these were changes that were slow in coming from the federal government and so we are simply aligning with the calendar that they had -- or the timelines that they had put forward on their side. So, again, I ought to have conveyed that to committee earlier; I apologize for not doing so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So the other matter that I raised was clearly going back in time now several years for some of these provisions. I just want to get the Minister on record that we didn't actually lose any revenues as a result of these delays or changes or whatever. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, there's no lost revenues on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. And I understand that one of the provisions of this bill are to allow for greater information sharing between the -- I think it's the Canada Revenue Agency and our government, and maybe that sort of goes both ways. But committee has raised the issue of trying to understand and get, you know, precise figures for a number of tax credits that we have, like for political contributions and so on. And because I guess in the interest of transparency and accountability, it would be nice to be able to put dollar figures on the value of the lost revenues associated with some of these tax credits.

So, can the Minister confirm, with these new information sharing provisions, that we can now get information from the Canada Revenue Agency on the value of these tax credits? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, I can say that refundable tax credits do show up in the public accounts but something that is a non-refundable credit may not be the same. Obviously, we'll certainly do our best to try to make better use of the information sharing provisions. But, I mean, if there are specific elements of tax credits or specific tax provisions that the Member's interested in getting information on, you know, if we can get that, again, I'm happy to try to distill that data as much as possible. This, theoretically, is supposed to help with that data collection from the federal side and they do administer, on our behalf, a lot through the Canada Revenue Agency. So, again, hopefully this will indeed answer that, but if there's specific elements of credits that the Member's looking for, that would be helpful to know. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, it's not so much "me" -- I might have some interest -- but I'd understood committee was interested in getting some calculations or, you know, the value of the lost revenues to this government from things like political contributions as a tax credit. So I'm going to leave this to committee, but I think there's a commitment from the Minister there to ask Canada Revenue Agency for that information if committee wants it. And probably in the interest of full disclosure, that kind of information should start to appear in the full accounts in a more

transparent and fuller fashion. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, I'm happy to try to get that data. And, again, just having briefly a conversation here with the director of fiscal policies, that that may be difficult to determine just what the amount of lost revenues are, are sort of anecdotal. The expectation is that it's not likely a significant value nonetheless -- and again, I mean, if it's across every type of tax credit, yes, we would need to just go back and look at exactly what kinds of credits we're talking about and what kind of lost revenue we're talking about. But, again, we'll go and have a look and we'll see if we can get some information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. General comments? Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Can we proceed to a clause by clause review of the bill?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. I will call the clauses in groups.

Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1 to 5, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Clause 6 to 10, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Clause 11 to 13, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

I'll go to the chair of the Standing Committee for Economic Development and Environment for any opening comments. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment identified contaminated sites in the Northwest Territories as a priority for the committee to focus on. Several stakeholders were engaged to provide feedback and guide the committee through its review of contaminated sites. Committee received seven public presentations from the stakeholders in both private and in public sector throughout the review, and as a result that the review as a committee presented the report with the 16 recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, February 7th, 2023.

I want to thank my committee for reviewing this as a priority in prevention of the management of contaminated sites. And, Madam Chair, individual Members might have some additional comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 39-19(2). Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I want to commend the chair and members of the committee, that included myself, for the hard work that went into this. We had a lot of support in getting these presenters before us and in compiling the report. And, you know, why is this important? You know, our government has assumed tens of millions of dollars of unnecessary public liabilities as a result of measures that were not taken to prevent contaminated sites. And, you know, the biggest one is just, you know, five or seven kilometres down the road here, the Giant Mine, where our government is now contributing, over a period of time, about \$23 million towards the remediation of that site.

Another one -- and I'm certainly going to be raising this a little bit later in this sitting -- is the Cameron Hills sour gas field that was owned by Strategic Oil and Gas. Our government is now booked \$20 million of liability associated with this property.

You know, I would rather spend that money on housing, education, healthcare, anything except for remediation of contaminated sites which are clearly preventable. And the last site

that I mentioned was assumed post-devolution. So that's why this is important.

It's also important because this can help us as a government implement some of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically Article 29, which says that States shall take effective measure to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous material shall take place in the lands or territories of Indigenous peoples without their free, prior, and informed consent. That hasn't happened here, Madam Chair.

So, in any event, I commend committee. There's, I think, a number of very sound recommendations here that provide a bit of a roadmap for how we can avoid and prevent liabilities in the future. Unfortunately, this was a mandate item in the last Assembly for the government and very little, if any, work was done. And I don't really -- I have yet to see any legislative regulatory changes in the life of this Assembly to help prevent further contaminated sites. And I think that's one of the reasons why committee took such an interest in this topic. Because the government hasn't done anything on this, we're giving them a mandate and, I think, a bit of a roadmap to lay that track. And there are some timelines associated with some of these recommendations, and I really look forward to the response from the Cabinet side to these recommendations. And some of these are very easy low hanging fruit that this government should undertake very quickly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, want to thank all of our staff and the committee for the hard work on this report. One of the reasons that this was an important topic to myself is that I have also had a lot of involvement with the Giant Mine for many, many years as a consultant. And, in fact, that was actually the reason that I ended up in the Northwest Territories to begin with, was to take a job with the technical adviser at Giant Mine.

As an employee of the contractor at the mine, as a consultant at the mine, later on I have watched, over the years, numerous contacts and workers from the south -- or contracts going to the south and workers coming from the south to do the work on the project. And you can imagine how disappointing it was when I once bid on the project for the construction management contract only to find out that the government, once again -- the federal government at least this time -- chose to use money as the deciding factor and went with the company that had proposed \$25 million less for

the project on their bid despite the fact that our project actually would have -- or our proposal would have placed Indigenous people into the leadership roles at the mine within five years.

Then, bidding on the projects at the mine as a consultant, I was then told that the Aboriginal content that I had worked very hard to incorporate into my bid was only going to be used if my technical bid was the same as another, and they needed a tie breaker. That was from the current contractor -- or construction management supervisors at the mine now. My understanding is most of them live in the south, Calgary. I'm looking at their website right now. Their head office is in Centreville, Virginia, in the US. So it's very clear to me that this project, which is billions of dollars, is just funneling money out of the North, and nobody really is benefitting that much here from it. If anything, what the people here are getting are health issues and headache and poor quality of life as a result of that, not to mention the impacts of all these southern workers coming in and taking all of our housing away and not having any ability to build their own camps. We have no market for that. So I guess I just want to say that I think this was a missed opportunity. I actually think it is way too late. I think that we've missed the boat on Giant Mine, and I'm hoping that the work that the committee has done can actually spur future work to be in the true spirit of keeping work and money and contracts in the North. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Any other general comments? Seeing no further comments, MLA for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 348-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2), STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– MANDATORY APPROVED CLOSURE AND  
RECLAMATION PLANS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a mandatory legislative requirement for companies to operate with approved closure and reclamation plans that are regularly reviewed and updated with appropriate adjustments of financial security. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 349-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2), STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– CLOSURE AND RECLAMATION TOOLS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories keep closure and reclamation tools up to date and publicly available to ensure that the GNWT is collecting enough security to reflect true costs of closure and reclamation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. And I do urge anyone who's listening to actually read the rationale for this recommendation. But we have something adopted. This government has adopted the use of what's called the reclaim model. And it's basically a set of spreadsheets that are quite sophisticated, and unit costs are calculated based on experience from consultants working in the private sector on other government-led remediation efforts, and those are used as a basis to calculate what it would cost for a third party to come in and remediate a site according to an approved closure and reclamation plan, and that's why having these plans approved is very important, so you can get an actual accurate estimate. The problem is that this set of spreadsheets is on the ENR website but it dates from 2017. It's now four and a half/five years out of date. And we know what has happened with construction-contractor costs, fuel costs since over the last period of time. We've seen the effects of that in our capital budget alone. So this is why this recommendation is being made. That model on the ENR website has been prepared by consultants. And I'm glad that ENR posts it there and uses it and maybe so the unit costs have been updated, but it's not publicly available. And that's what proponents are asked to do, is to use that model to calculate the reclamation liabilities so the land and water board can hear from different parties using the

same spreadsheet, maybe some different numbers, to actually try to set a value for the reclamation liability, to make sure that the public is protected from assuming those costs, because if we don't have the right financial security and something happens, it's going to come back to us just like it did with Cameron Hills, which didn't have an approved plan. So this is really to try to get the department to update that reclaim model, make it publicly available, and do it on a regular basis. And I'm sure the staff would like to get that updated. But when what's publicly available is five years old, we got a problem. So I know that the Minister wants to probably get this work done but maybe this recommendation will help move that along and make sure that the public doesn't get stuck with a bill at the end of the day. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. To the motion? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And yes, I agree with what my colleague has said. And to build upon that in a more sort of microscale is when this work gets done around environmental assessment and clean-up -- and I know that there's probably been some changes, and I hope there's been some changes since I was bidding on these old contaminated sites myself, but it's always a battle to get proper budgets in place for any sort of assessment and reclamation work with the consultants. And I think in this area it's at the disservice to the consultants, not what I generally am saying about GNWT contracts. In this case, oftentimes the environmental budgets are sort of nickelled and dimed quite a bit and that delays the work, considering that contracts are not put out by the GNWT or the federal government until well into August because of the -- at times, because of the fiscal yearend being in April. And as a result, once they start getting into that back and forth around the budgeting, it delays the start of the contract. And what ends up happening, our contracts don't get fulfilled and then it actually costs us double the money to go back later and try to get the samples that were missed.

As well too, any time you're doing environmental work, if you're only visiting a site once to get samples once a year, you're not really getting a fulsome picture of what is happening at the site during the different seasons and, you know, if you sample under ice, the water will have more contamination in it because ice will drop out contaminants. If you're sampling in the summer, the water will look cleaner.

Therefore one of the reasons I think this is so important, and agree that it's not been updated as crucially as it needs to be, is to ensure that we are actually getting good bang for our buck when it comes to environmental clean-ups and assessments but also ensuring that, you know, we're not putting people at risk because we are skimping on their budget, that we're making the best use of the dollars, we're going at the right time of the year to collect the right data. A lot of environmental work is fiscally driven and to its detriment. And so I think it's very, very important to have a great -- a true understanding of what these costs are. And by updating their tools, it's the only way that they'll be able to do so.

I just want to note, and that I will follow up on this, that the contaminated guidelines -- or sorry, the guidelines for contaminated soil remediation have been the same since I first came north. I don't believe there's been an update since I became a Regular Member. And even then, they were only guidelines. Oftentimes you're sitting in an environmental limbo of which standards you're applying because the GNWT itself has not developed that standard for itself and, therefore, different companies will use different standards and they'll be down, you know, using different groundwater, like Alberta's levels and things that just don't always jive with the GNWT -- or sorry, with the Northwest Territories. So, again, I can't stress the importance of this recommendation. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to point out a couple of things also. Some of these regulations that were talked about is a reminder from one of my colleagues on the 17th Assembly and a former ENR Minister. We also have a site in -- we always talk about Cameron Hills and we also always talk about Giant Mine. But we have a site that has to be looked at also is the NTCL Bell Rock site. It's one of the outstanding issues with the Salt River claim, Salt River First Nation. And, yes, you know, sometimes we are blamed for a lot of these recommendations that we bring forward when it's other Assemblies that have not dotted their Is and crossed the Ts. And I'm glad that we're correcting some of those standards, because those standards affect all the people within the area of Thebacha, especially with the Bell Rock site. And I'm glad that we are doing this -- these motions because that means that we're worried about the environment. And I, too, worry about some of these issues, especially when it comes to making sure that big business is always

accountable for what they do within those areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 350-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– ALIGNMENT AND COMMUNITY-BASED  
MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE  
PROGRAMS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work inter-departmentally with communities and their existing community-based monitoring programs to align monitoring efforts with the surveillance programs required under regulatory permits and licenses. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 351-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– REGULATORY DECISION-MAKING AND  
INSPECTION CAPACITY,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories

ensure it has the internal expertise to inform regulatory decision-making and inspection capacity to prevent further public liabilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I want to make sure that we have some very hardworking enforcement staff in place now, and I want to make sure that this is not perceived in any way as a criticism of the work that they do. What this is, is a reflection of findings from the environmental audit that took place in 2020 that wanted -- you know, that pointed out that we want to make sure that there's an adequate inspection, and I'm going to quote here, "ensuring adequate inspection capacity as well as timely and transparent inspections, reporting, and follow up." So in no way is this a criticism of our hardworking enforcement staff. They have a very difficult job, sometimes, of trying to work with operators and so on. And I certainly appreciate their hard work. But we want to make sure that they have the resources to do the work that needs to get done and that the public is not placed at risk of any kind of assuming further liabilities.

And there was a case recently highlighted in the media in Norman Wells where some dust rail debris, I guess is probably the nicest way to call it, was accumulated on a private property and -- or at least leased property, and nothing was really done about it. And now the town kind of left with trying to clean up these leased lands within their boundaries because nothing was really done about this. So in any event, this is about making sure that there's adequate capacity, resources for the people that know how to do the job to actually get it done, and to do it well to prevent further public liability. So I just wanted to make that clear, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 352-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– EXPANSION OF APPROACH TO  
CONTAMINATED SITES GUIDANCE  
DOCUMENT,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories expand the Approach to Contaminated Sites guidance document to ensure policies and processes are in place to prevent future public and environmental liabilities, most significantly projects that result in perpetual care situations; and further, that the policy and guidance with respect to public disclosure are also required. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just going to speak to this quickly. This document, Approach to Contaminated Sites, I think is only about 12 or 13 pages. In the last Assembly, where it was actually a mandate item do some work on this, we were promised a policy binder. Never got it. And promised a policy binder again in this Assembly. Never got anything. Nothing's been done in terms of actual policy work by our government. No legislative change, no regulatory change, no policy work other than this 12/13-page document. We got to do better. And that's what this is aimed at, Madam Chair. And I think many of the recommendations here, just roll them up, put them into a policy, Mr. Minister, and we start to actually get a better approach to prevent public liabilities from contaminated sites. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to also emphasize that industry has long asked for a number of these policies too, because they find themselves in confusing situations. There's been a long-time ask for a brown field policy site. And I think also some direction needs to be given on when, you know, a mine's going to be allowed to leave infrastructure, if at all, on a site. I don't think those are best to kind of just be made one-off kind of ministerial decisions. But there should be some proper policy.

And similarly, there's a motion in here about, you know, relinquishment. We similarly don't



have kind of a clear guidance on when we will finally, you know, take on a site and that mine and that company no longer has any obligations towards it. And there's a number of ways to look at that. But, you know, we've made a lot of improvements to our regulatory system. I think the land and water boards are operating better than they ever had. But they're not in the position to make those large government policy decisions on when the GNWT, at the end of the day, is going to, you know, take some sort of risk or take on a site and where exactly that line is. And, you know, we are going to, as committee, hopefully meet with the diamond mines and the ones that are going through their first closure. But we haven't done this before, and we certainly haven't done it as our government on the scale of the diamond mines are going through, and we need some certainty. The boards need some certainty; the companies need some certainty; and so do the taxpayers. So there is a lot of policy work that needs to be done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 353-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– EARLY WARNING SYSTEM TO PREVENT  
LIABILITIES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish an internal capacity for an effective early warning system to prevent further public liabilities; and further, this approach will also require clear measures to prevent perpetual care situations, including mandatory financial security that is regularly reviewed and adjusted. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 354-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
–REMEDIATION AND RECLAMATION  
TIMELINES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure legislation has clear and appropriate timelines for remediation and reclamation of inactive or suspended well sites. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you. I just want to speak a little bit on behalf of the chair. You know, he's got some sumps in Nunakput that are approaching the end of their life, and they're sitting there, and those oil companies are just hanging on to them and they're not remediating them because they don't want to put the money in. And as long as they just hold on to them, the GNWT, it's not their asset, they can't really do much, so. I think we really ought to revisit that and not let those get to the point where they're literally falling into the ocean in some case. And right now we don't seem to have the tools to correct that situation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 355-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MODEL OF  
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTIONAL  
CONTROL PROGRAM,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories study the government of Saskatchewan Institutional Control Program and develop a Northwest Territories model that better implements the polluter pays principle for the long term and unforeseen remediation of mining sites while providing regulatory certainty with respect to industry relinquishment; and further, that the Northwest Territories model should be developed by the end of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to highlight what this institutional control program is all about.

In Saskatchewan, the mining that takes place is generally in the northern part of the province. They've got a bunch of abandoned uranium mines there that I guess were federally owned, operated, or regulated and so on; a few gold mines here and there too, but. So they had this problem of these abandoned mines and no way of really trying to deal with them or find funding and so on. So what they did was they thought long and carefully about this, and they talked to people in the mining industry as well. The mining industry wants to get some certainty about when they can walk away from a site after using it. And that's not an unreasonable thing. You know, they'd go in, use an area, and they want to know when they're clear and free.

So what they -- the Saskatchewan government did was ask companies if you're going to leave a site, mining companies, there's two pots of money that you can and should be paying into. The first one is to kind of take care of ongoing maintenance -- care and maintenance at the site. Things like, you know, you might have to do a geotechnical inspection every few years of openings that have been closed or dam structures that have been left on site that, you know, tailings covers, to make sure that they're still working the way that they're supposed to. So those kind of ongoing care costs, you know, that money can be put into one pot.

A second pot, though, is to really deal with unforeseen events, like Mount Polley in British Columbia, where there was a catastrophic tailings failure and tailings went all the way down into Quesnel Lake, polluted salmon-bearing waters - what a mess. So, you know, there's some risk associated with those with some sites, so companies that are at high risk sites, they can put some money into an unforeseen events pot of money and then the government can access that to take care of, you know, potentially, you know, unforeseen catastrophic events.

Now this is a pretty new system in Saskatchewan. It's only been in place for I think less than a decade, and there's only two or three companies that are -- maybe three or four, that are in this program. But at least somebody's thought it through as a way for the government to actually have money in place to deal with sites and operators can then walk away and leave it, and they don't have to worry about the liability associated with these sites. And, you know, when you think about some of these sites, they're going to be here hundreds of years into the future. Where are the resources going to come from to manage them in a collective sense? So at least the Government of Saskatchewan has thought this through; they have a system in place. We have got nothing for Giant Mine, quite frankly, other than the environmental agreement that does I think start to look at some of this perpetual care plan that's going to have to be generated. But as a government that wants to promote responsible resource development, we have a duty to come up with a system that's going to allow industry to have clear and free -- knowing when relinquishment's going to take place and walk away but some public confidence that there's still resources that can look after sites for the regular care and maintenance and unforeseen events. And that's the beauty of this system. But we've got nothing. And I don't know what's happening within the departments to actually look at this issue. So I'll be very curious to see how the Cabinet responds to this recommendation. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 356-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION OF  
SECURITIES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement transparent and clear processes to ensure that securities are established, reviewed, and coordinated among various departments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Madam Chair, I'm going to speak to this quickly. We have at least three pieces of legislation -- maybe two I guess, that where financial security requirements can be placed on an operator or mine owner, oil and gas operation I guess if we include oil and gas, maybe three or four different pieces of legislation. So the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has the Waters Act and they can ask for -- or through that process, financial security for water-related use and an infrastructure site can be requested. And there's the Lands Act, Northwest Territories Lands Act for lands-related stuff. And then for oil and gas, you can have other provisions for financial security. And this is not set in stone. You know, what's land? What's water related? Is a tailings dam a land feature; is it a water-related feature? And how is that covered and coordinated between these two types of financial securities that could be requested? There's no arrangement for this to happen other than the land and water boards by practice have said give us one closure plan, we'll figure out what the liability is and we'll recommend a global figure. But even some of the figures that they've submitted with their draft licenses haven't been acceptable to our government because they can't figure it out or they don't know -- they don't want to hold security under one act when it should be for another act. This has got to be sorted out because what it does is it puts the public at risk that we're going to assume more liability in the future. So that's what this recommendation is aimed at. Maybe having a combined department as of April 1st will help resolve a bit of this, but it's also a legislative problem. But it could be solved through a memorandum of understanding or some way of dealing with this better. But what

we have in place is causing confusion, double bonding possibly, even -- or you know, for operators or mine owners that's not fair to them. This stuff has got to get sorted out, and I'll look forward to how Cabinet's going to respond to this one as well. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 357-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
FINANCIAL SECURITY,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and amend all legislative requirements regarding the form of financial security for environmental compliance and remediation to ensure financial security must be irrevocable, and absolute unconditional. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, why this is important is under our watch, we had the Cantung Mine go into creditor protection, and the federal government had allowed them to put up the Mactung property as financial security. How crazy is that? But our government didn't change that when we took over the site as a result of devolution. Management of -- or at least environmental management regulation of the site post-devolution. So that's why our government had to go through all of that mess and eventually try to sell Mactung, get some money back. I'm not convinced we're ever going to recover all of our costs. But our government allowed the company to keep Mactung as financial security. That's crazy. Shouldn't have happened quite frankly, Madam Chair. So the Minister now can accept any form of financial security. If you scribble a note on the

back of a napkin, a promissory note, promise to pay some money, the Minister can accept that. That is not the way that we should be operating in terms of responsible resource development. So this is about restricting the discretion of the Minister to accept unreliable forms of financial security that put the public at risk. And we need to put this in legislation to restrict the Minister's discretion to protect the public interest. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 358-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– ABSOLUTE LIABILITY CAPS INCREASES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake an immediate review of the oil and gas spills and debris liability regulations to ensure that the absolute liability caps are increased to fully implement the polluter pays principle, reflect best practices and protect the public from liabilities; and further, that the review and increases to the caps should be implemented before the end of the 19th Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, this is a cap that's set in regulations. Cabinet can change this tomorrow if they want to; the Minister could change this tomorrow. The federal government had these caps. We adopted those with devolution. But after devolution, the federal government, the Auditor General came and looked at how the federal government tries to manage public liabilities and the Auditor General recommended to the federal government that they needed to change these caps in the areas where they retained jurisdiction, the offshore in particular. And so

the Auditor General said that you need to change this, especially in light of what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. So the federal government changed its regulations for the offshore and the absolute liability cap, as I understand it, I think is a billion dollars now. So that's the kind of -- and I'm not suggesting that the same kind of risk or blowout could happen necessarily on the onshore but as a responsible resource developer, you would think that by now we would want to protect the public and at least change the caps that were set by the federal government, artificially low in my opinion, and it's something that our government can do tomorrow. So I've raised this in the last Assembly. I've raised it again in this Assembly. But there just doesn't seem to be any appetite on the other side to actually protect the public interest. So, again, I'll be very curious to see how the Cabinet is going to respond to this because the Minister can change this tomorrow if she wants. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 359-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– PUBLIC ACCESS TO FINANCIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories make financial security information, including operator, land and water-related securities, amounts, location of project, form of security, expiry dates, public through a website to help build public confidence in resource management. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 360-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– ENHANCED REPORTING ON GNWT  
ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES  
DASHBOARD,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Department of Finance provide a plan within timelines to enhance reporting on the Government of the Northwest Territories environmental liabilities dashboard by matching report on prevention and management of contaminated sites reporting practices in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Federal Contaminated Sites Inventory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Firstly, we now have an environmental liabilities dashboard so I would like to thank the government for taking that step. But it's not quite as fulsome as the federal one and hopefully we get there one day. And to this point, specifically we can see in the public accounts the total environmental liabilities for the GNWT, and then you go to the dashboard and you can see all the sites we have environmental liabilities for but you actually can't figure out what the estimated liability is for any individual site. And Finance, during public accounts, says they don't want to do that because it'll affect procurement, and I'll note the federal government does it. And the other reason at times they don't do it is because some of the sites are essentially at zero dollars, no cost estimate has yet really been fulsomely done to note the environmental liability. The feds have done some really cool work in this. They've actually created models for the -- you know, they categorized the type of contaminated site they have and then they go and find an average clean-up cost and it's a moving model of what they -- you know, if you have a gas station, what does a gas station cost to clean up as an example. And then they book

that as a liability. So that's a great step we can potentially take.

And I'll just once again belay I don't think the procurement concern is real. You know, we have some contaminated sites and the cost estimate is from, say, 2015 and it's been shared with committee. We all know that already that cost estimate is out of date and by the time you actually go to procure the work, it's probably a decade or two away and the scope of work will change. So just trying to publicly claim what you think the current liability is is not somehow going to affect procurement which is, in most of these cases, many years away and with a much more expanded scope of work. But allowing the public and allowing committee to know 'okay, how much do you think a site is presently worth' would be very helpful to know just whether our current environmental liabilities on our books is at all accurate. And I suspect that it is not at all accurate; it's very, very low. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 361-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY  
MANAGEMENT OF LANDFILLS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop a plan with a budget and a schedule to better support communities in the management of landfills, that includes training, capacity building, best practices in waste management, diversion, backhaul and related matters; and further, that the plan should be developed by the end of the 19th Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. You know, this is -- we spoke to a number of communities and their landfills are largely becoming one of their biggest budget crunches. And that's largely due to water license obligations that have been placed on them, environmental regulations that have been placed on them, which are all well and fine but at some point if we're going to keep putting these obligations on communities and their landfills and not provide them any training, capacity building, or further funding, it's just setting them up for failure. And I know quite a few of our landfills are not in compliance with their water license and, really, there's no way they could be without getting some funding. And we also spoke to some of the communities and landfill operators, and there are things that can be done that in the long term are much cheaper. They just simply need the capacity.

There's another recommendation in here for a territorial backhaul program. We've done a couple of them. They've kind of been one-off, and they've been successes. I tell you when you take the hazardous waste out of a community, all of a sudden, they're environmental liabilities go way down, the cost of them managing their dump goes way down, and it gets properly disposed of. We're shipping full barges up the Mackenzie all the time and we're bringing them back empty. I think we need to just standardize some of this and make sure we're supporting our communities so they're not left with landfills that, you know, are giant liabilities for them and giant costs and have no capacity to manage. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with my colleague from Yellowknife North. I, again, in my former life prior to being an MLA, spent a lot of time in the territories' landfills. I was very lucky to be some of those people categorizing waste or working with land farms.

I do want to caution, though, that one thing that -- and sort of touched upon by my colleague, that the capacity of communities is often overtaxed. And this is an area where I think that is very much the case. And as well too that it doesn't always make sense necessarily for each community itself to be having maybe their own landfill strategy in the sense that some of these issues could be done in a regional sense I think as well. And I think that needs to be explored. We don't necessarily want to say let's build this in every community like a land farm, which is a soil remediation

farm, which I thought would be a great idea until I started to speak to somebody about the logistics of doing that. So I've watched the GNWT come in and have to do assessments of the landfills for things like storage tanks, for asbestos-containing materials, for lead paint. I've had GNWT clients tell me don't worry about that being disposed of properly, just throw it in the landfill after doing sampling where we wouldn't have necessarily known yet whether or not the materials contained anything hazardous. I've watched wildlife entering all the landfills as well which, while beautiful, is pretty disturbing to see a bunch of these majestic cranes all over the community garbage. So I can't, again, recommend this enough. I think we've given the municipal infrastructure gap that has not really been dealt with despite the \$5 million we tried to throw at it. I think that the GNWT has a responsibility here to take this on and take this out of the hands of and responsibility only of the municipalities. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 362-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– PARTNERSHIPS FOR LANDFILL  
MANAGERS IN TRAINING,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories explore partnerships with industry and industry associations to provide hands-on practical training for landfill managers across the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And, again, this addresses some of the issues I mentioned about capacity in communities but not only within the communities but within our

own government. We were lucky enough as a committee to go and -- lucky -- to go and explore -- or take a tour of the Yellowknife City Solid Waste Facility. They don't call it a "dump" anymore. And in that, part of the tour was done by the contractor who is operating that site. And it was apparent to me that having that industry knowledge and expertise was really helping to improve the function of the waste facility. In particular, I found the innovative use of old tires to create a roadway for heavy equipment so that the heavy equipment no longer travelled on the dirt road which was eating it up every year and creating more in maintenance costs. So here we had an item that was a waste item taking up space in the landfill, and they used it to create something that saved them some operational money. So I don't know that that is necessarily -- or that type of creativity is necessarily present always in governments but yet it is always present in industry. So I think it's really key and clear here that this will only be tackled through industry partnership and is a good way to build northern business as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 363-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 39-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
REPORT ON THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED SITES  
– GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO  
RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this recommendation within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 39-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on the prevention and management of contaminated sites?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 39-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on the prevention and management of contaminated sites. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

---SHORT RECESS

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 62, Committee Report 39-19(2), and would like to report progress with 16 motions adopted, and that Committee Report 39-19(2) is concluded, and that Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax, is ready for third reading. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, February 10th, 2023, at 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 1188-19(2), Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Red Cross
  - Oral Question 1326-19(2), NIHB Covered Areas
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to the Budget Address (Day 3 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Motions
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
  - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act

- Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
- Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
- Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
- Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 10th, 2023 at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:50 p.m.