



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to  
Motion 77-19(2): Review of Territorial Land Lease Policy and Procedures**

**Motion**

**NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to forgive and pause the collection of current and new lease payments and fees of all Indigenous cabin lease holders immediately;**

**AND FURTHER, the Government of the Northwest Territories complete a review of cabin and recreational leases to ensure there is no infringement of Indigenous rights through the collection of taxes and fees;**

**AND FURTHERMORE, the Government of the Northwest Territories develop more consistent land use policies that are representative of completed land, resources and self-government agreements and on-going land, resources and self-government negotiations;**

**AND FURTHERMORE, the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.**

**GNWT Response**

The GNWT is committed to working collaboratively with Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations to develop a new approach for the administration and management of rights-based cabins on public land. This broader and long-term approach will be informed by engagement with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations and will be developed in alignment with the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management. The GNWT initiated this collaborative work in January 2023, when the GNWT invited Indigenous leadership to engage in dialogue to develop a long-term approach that meets the interests of Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and the GNWT.

Through this collaborative work, the GNWT expects to establish appropriate long-term policies with respect to cabins on public land that are representative of both completed land, resources and self-government agreements and on-going land, resources, and self-government negotiations. As part of this work, the GNWT will commit to conducting an internal legal review to determine if the collection of taxes and fees for recreational leases infringes upon Indigenous rights.

Effective immediately, the GNWT will also pause collections action on any outstanding arrears for lease fees from Indigenous recreational lease holders where their lease is in an area where they also have an asserted or established Aboriginal and/or Treaty right to harvest. This would mean that any eligible lessee with outstanding arrears from before the date of this Motion, would not be sent to collections, or that GNWT would halt collections actions for eligible lessees who are already in collections for outstanding lease fees. In addition, on a case-by-case basis, the GNWT consider forgiveness of lease fee arrears existing prior to the date of this Motion for Indigenous recreational lease holders where their lease is in an area where they also have an asserted or established Aboriginal and/or Treaty right to harvest.

During Indigenous engagement on the development of aspects of this response to motion, concerns were raised about the cost of living related to lease fees. In addition, cost of living challenges in the NWT have been raised by the public and Members of the Legislative Assembly in both the 18th and 19th Legislative Assemblies, as have concerns regarding lease fees. To help to address financial pressures and assist with cost of living challenges for all lease holders, the GNWT will implement a three-tiered system for recreational lessees with rates reduced from around \$840, to either \$600, \$400 or \$300. Those with year round access will pay more than those with seasonal access. The GNWT will also reduce lease rent minimums for residential lessees from \$840 to \$800, and the percentage charged for residential lessees will drop from 5% of assessed value to 2.5% of assessed value.

Significant work and engagement is still needed to develop a long-term approach which addresses concerns expressed by Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations regarding the management of camps and cabins on public land which support harvesting rights. The GNWT will continue to engage with Indigenous Governments and Indigenous organizations to develop a new policy approach for rights-based cabins which considers and respects Aboriginal and/or Treaty rights.