



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Day 16**

**19<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2020**

Pages 557 – 606

**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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**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**  
(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**  
(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**  
(Sahtu)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**  
(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

**Ms. Julie Green**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**  
(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Hon. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Mr. Steve Norn**  
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**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 responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Diane Thom**  
(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**
**Tuesday, March 10, 2020**
**Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Hon. Katrina Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Diane Thom, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER'S RULING**

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Good afternoon, Members. On February 27, 2020, the Member for Monfwi raised a point of privilege. The point of privilege raised was that the Premier acted beyond her authority when terminating the appointment of the president of Aurora College. It was suggested that the Premier had breached the collective privileges of this House and acted against the dignity and authority of this Assembly as per Rule 20. The Member also stated that the Premier obstructed the ability of this Legislature in carrying out its lawmaking functions.

As Speaker, I must determine two matters:

- first, whether a matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether there has been a prima facie breach of privilege, in other words that, at first glance, the matter appears to be a breach of privilege and warrants immediate consideration by the House; and
- second, the extent to which the matter has infringed upon any Member's ability to perform their duties or appears to be a contempt against the dignity of the House.

First, I will consider whether the point of privilege was raised at the earliest opportunity.

The Member received a legal opinion on or about February 12, 2020. The Member was absent from the House on February 13. The House was adjourned until February 25. The Member questioned the Premier on February 26, 2020, and tabled the legal opinion that day. The Member raised the point of privilege on February 27, 2020, after the Member reviewed the Premier's responses to the Member's oral questions in Hansard from February 26, 2020. As a result, I am comfortable that the Member raised it at the earliest opportunity.

Second, I will determine whether a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred.

As Speaker, it is not my place to determine whether a law has been broken. The Minister of Justice correctly pointed this out when she spoke to the point of order raised that same day. Both the Member and the Premier rely on differing legal opinions. Unless a ruling has been made in a court of law, neither opinion can be considered "right," "wrong," or "misleading."

It is almost impossible to conclude that a Member has deliberately misled the House unless a Member provides completely different responses to the exact same question. That is not what happened in this case.

The Premier has remained consistent in her responses to oral questions on this issue. On February 10, 2020, the Member for Kam Lake questioned the Premier about her ability to terminate the president. The Premier said, quote, "While the associate deputy minister may be statutory appointed to the position of president under the Aurora College Act, the employment relationship of deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers is clearly with me as Premier, and it remains in my sole purview to terminate the employment of an associate deputy minister across departments," end of quote.

Shortly after, the Member for Monfwi asked a similar question of the Premier. The Premier responded, quote, "Again, I think it might be a communications issue. At no time have I broken the law. In fact, we have had more legal opinions on this than not. The Premier is responsible for hiring and terminating associate deputy ministers and deputy ministers. Appointments to positions are not contingent on the Minister having to hire or terminate. There are many statutory positions that the Minister is not responsible for hiring. In fact, very few positions can a Minister hire for. We are blending in two things that should not be blended," end of quote.

There were several other occasions where Members asked oral questions to the Premier, on the authority of the Premier to dismiss the president

of Aurora College. The Premier's responses were consistent.

In conclusion, there is a clear difference of legal opinions between the Member for Monfwi and the Premier on their interpretation of the Aurora College Act. Although frustrations mounted on this particular subject, this difference of opinion does not prevent Members from fulfilling their parliamentary functions. Nor does such a disagreement breach the collective privileges of the House. Therefore, I find it is not a prima facie breach of privilege, and the point of privilege is dismissed.

Members, a point of privilege is a serious matter. Alleging that a Member of this House misled the Chamber or is breaking the law is a serious escalation that should be reserved for the most serious circumstances. I encourage Members to exercise caution when doing so.

I will now deal with the point of order raised by the Government House Leader on the same day regarding comments made by the Member for Monfwi.

The Government House Leader suggested that comments by the Member for Monfwi seriously violated the rules of order and decorum in this House. It was suggested by the Member that the Premier had "misled the House," "overstepped her authority," "broke the law," "played free and easy" with the laws passed by this House. The Government House Leader feels that these comments went beyond the standards of acceptable debate in this House.

The Government House Leader believes the Member violated Rule 24(h), (i), (j), and (k). He also believes the Member for Monfwi's comments were "inappropriate and unparliamentary."

Members, it is my duty to maintain order and decorum and to decide questions of order. Therefore, when a point of order is raised I must:

1. State the rule in question.
2. Decide whether the point of order was raised at the earliest opportunity, and whether the conduct violates the rule in question. This is usually decided on a case-by-case basis.

The Second Edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 2009, page 619, states, quote, "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner, and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber."

I have reviewed the comments made by the Member for Monfwi in the House and Rule 24, which reads, "In debate, a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member:

- (h) makes allegations against another Member, a House officer, a witness, or a Member of the public;
- (i) imputes false or hidden motives to another Member;
- (j) charges another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood;
- (k) uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder."

Members, the Government House Leader raised the point of order the next day. He chose to wait to review Hansard before calling the point of order. I find this to be reasonable and not an unnecessary delay.

On the point of order, I have reviewed the comments made by the Member for Monfwi with respect to the tone, manner, intention in which he made them. I find they did cross the line and are contrary to Rule 24(h), (i), (j), and (k).

Members, please remember that the Rules of the Legislative Assembly are sanctioned by us. As Speaker, it is my responsibility to make sure that they are followed in this House. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously and so should you.

Respect has to be exercised by both sides of the House. Unkind or inflammatory comments made by a Member when addressing another Member are not necessary, and do not encourage a respectful, balanced discussion.

As Members, you have to work with one another in the best interest of all the people of the Northwest Territories.

We are a consensus system of government and have our own standards, standards we are proud of and that we'd like to uphold. It's been said before, but I will say it again, while other legislatures may allow this style of debate, we find it unacceptable. I think most of the people we represent would agree.

I find there is a point of order. I will now ask the Member for Monfwi to withdraw his remarks and apologize to the House. Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not available.] Mr. Speaker, I speak one of my 11 official languages in the House, probably the only one in the House. Today, I do not have an interpreter. I highly encourage you to shut down the

House at this point in time since I can't speak my language. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Monfwi, are you rising on a point of privilege? Thank you, Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely right. I'm raising a point of privilege, since I can't speak in my language in this House so that other Members can understand what I'm saying. It's very important that I speak my language, one of the 11 official languages in the House, and I feel that we cannot continue having our discussion or debate today, as I do not have an interpreter at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, it is my right to do so, to speak my language as I've done over the last 15 years, and I'll continue to do so, but I cannot continue today with the limited resources that I have with the interpreters. Unfortunately, the two are away today for various reasons, personal reasons.

Mr. Speaker, it's very unfortunate that I stand here today to raise a point of privilege on this particular subject, which is very dear to my heart as a language-speaking person in this House. I've been very proud to speak my language and, today, I simply cannot do that for Members, even yourself, Mr. Speaker, to understand what I'm saying in my language, so I just want to raise the point of privilege to declare that we cannot continue with this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. Masi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will take the point of privilege under advisement and will deal with this matter tomorrow. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 33-19(2): VALUE OF TOURISM

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the value of tourism in the Northwest Territories, we often speak in terms of the dollars spent and the number of visitors tallied. In 2018-2019, the tourism industry showed record numbers in both of these categories, emphasizing once again that the approach to, and investments in, our Tourism 2020 Strategy are working. In fact, over the last five years, we have increased the number of visitors to our territory by 42 percent and boosted spending by 43 percent.

As we look to grow and diversify our territory's economy, these figures are important to our economic outlook. This growth in tourism means new tourism businesses and new service providers. With growth and diversification comes increased

employment in our tourism sector and new revenue for our economy.

However, Mr. Speaker, the full value of tourism is so much more. In Inuvik, Alestine's eatery is a constant flurry of activity. Thanks to a regular and growing client base of summer road-tripping visitors, their business is thriving. What is unsaid, and sometimes unnoticed, is that Alestine's success as a tourism destination means that Inuvik residents also have a restaurant to enjoy year-round.

In Tulita, campgrounds and walking trails have been built to accommodate tourists travelling the Mackenzie and Great Bear Rivers; however, local residents are also benefitting. Families are walking the groomed paths together, healthy eating workshops are being held in the picnic areas, and sharing circles are taking place in the campground teepee.

In Jean Marie River, local artist and bed-and-breakfast owner Lucy Simon shares the art of moose-hair tufting, a traditional skill that she is helping to keep alive thanks to the tourism demand for her product. As Ms. Simon shares her creative process with her guests, she is also teaching her skills to a new generation, preserving and sharing this time-honoured activity that was once passed on to her.

In Fort Smith, Northwestern Air Lease has seen a significant increase in their tourism-related bookings over the last four years. As a result, young athletes from the region are now benefitting from the company's success, thanks to discounted rates for teams and groups travelling to compete at sporting events.

In Yellowknife, busses and vans park outside Weaver and Devore to allow tourists to flock inside. While this fourth-generation family-run business was established almost exclusively to serve mining camps and fishers, tourists now line the aisles, as well, providing benefits and opportunities for yet another generation of staff and their families.

Mr. Speaker, while our government supports the tourism sector with investments in destination marketing, industry capacity building, and community readiness, we all play a part in its success. Our North is known for its spectacular landscapes and adventures, its strong Indigenous cultures and traditions, the midnight sun, and Aurora Borealis. Most of all, Mr. Speaker, our North is known for its people, their warm and welcoming spirit, and our world-renowned northern hospitality.

With the success of our tourism industry, however, there may be times when an influx of visitors to our territory puts a strain on our communities and their

resources. More people wanting to visit our territory is the kind of challenge we want to have, though, and we will continue to work with communities to develop services and options for visitors across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in coming weeks, using the hashtag #ValueofTourismNWT, Northwest Territories residents will have the opportunity to read more about the projects that I have highlighted today. In doing so, I hope that we will all come to recognize that the value of tourism is much more than just economic. Yes, tourism continues to be an economic driver across the Northwest Territories, injecting over \$200 million into our economy annually, but the value of tourism is also found in the infrastructure and services that we enjoy as residents. It is reflected in the preservation of our traditions and cultures, and it is implicit in the wellness of our communities and our families. Tourism highlights for the world what those of us living in the North already know, what a wonderful and magical place it is to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTION TREATMENT SERVICES

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, today, I'm going to talk about the need for more addictions and after-care services for the people of Fort Smith and the NWT. The NWT has been without an addiction treatment centre since June 2013. As an MLA, I firmly believe that each and every family has experienced a family member, a friend, or has been privy to information about a problem of being addicted to some form of drug, alcohol, or other substances. We are a small territory, and we have some excellent workers who are very committed to the problem and to the clients they serve, but there are gaps in the system that we should be addressing, and I feel, at times, there has been a lack of political will from successive governments to fund the gaps that will really make a difference.

As the MLA for Thebacha, and having been involved on the addiction scene for over 10 years with Salt River and the community of Fort Smith, I feel that addiction treatments have to be expanded to other treatment centres in the South so that more choices are available to the client. The treatment centres themselves have complete teams, which have psychologists, psychiatrists, addiction doctors, and counsellors who also have traditional knowledge and training to counsel all types of addiction abuse and trauma.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that there are other options which our government could explore. In fact, when I was chief of Salt River, we had partnered with the Poundmaker's treatment centre, which is based out of Edmonton, along with the territorial government, and conducted a mobile community-based addiction six-week pilot project, which featured strong cultural and on-the-land components in its programming. That programming was very well received by both participants and the community members alike, plus two follow-up after-care sessions with a complete training team from Poundmaker's treatment centre.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there are other options that could be available to the people of the NWT in the areas of addiction treatment, but this can only be made possible by all levels of government working together, which includes our territorial, federal, as well as the municipal and Indigenous governments. The South River and the community of Fort Smith were able to achieve this type of pilot project with a more northern-focused treatment option. I don't see why any other community in the Northwest Territories couldn't do so either.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to address another aspect of addiction services that are lacking in the NWT, which are inadequate levels of after-care supports that are offered to people who return home from treatment centres. After-care is an extremely important component for people who struggle with addictions; yet, our territory is lagging behind --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Thebacha, could you seek unanimous consent to conclude your statement, please? Thank you.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address another aspect of addiction services that are lacking in the NWT, which are the inadequate levels of after-care supports that are offered to people who return home from treatment centres. After-care is an extremely important component for people who struggle with addictions; yet, our territory is lagging behind in offering any real substantive supports to people when they return from treatment. When people get out of treatment, they must readjust to everyday life, which can be challenging after getting used to the routines and structure of rehab. To help people with these transitions, the best supports that we can offer people are things like halfway houses, sober living homes, and greater access to counselling services that must be available in all communities and regions across the NWT. We can,



and we must, do better in this area, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The need for a strategy to advance economic opportunities and agriculture was identified in the 2013 Economic Opportunities Strategy. Subsequently, the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly developed an agricultural strategy that looked to expand the agricultural sector, increase local food production, increase producer and supplier opportunities, and improve distribution networks for NWT food and food-related products.

Three terms later, this 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly continues on a path looking to increase employment in small communities, reduce the cost of living, increase economic diversification, and increase food security; all the components we would expect in developing a strong and sustainable agricultural sector. The Minister of ITI must either reject, revise, or accept the strategy of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly if we are to make it our own and move it forward. I would say, let us move on it, and make it a reality.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to build a relevant and viable agricultural industry, we must ensure that the legislation is in place to make it work. We must ensure that producers have access to land, and that land cost is reasonable. We must provide the support and resources producers require. We must encourage and provide new and upcoming producers with training opportunities. We must partner with the federal government to leverage agricultural funding, and most importantly, we must partner with Indigenous peoples to ensure they have provided an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. This approach will enhance the probability of successfully delivering on the agricultural strategy.

The reality is that we have a number of producers who are hampered by lack of clarity around agricultural expansion. They are forced to approach it from the standpoint of hobby farming. These same producers are ready to move up to the next level of production, and we, as government, must support them by removing existing barriers and providing the support required to make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have to remember that each producer is unique. We must work in collaboration with them while taking a small-steps approach to

building on each component and each success if we expect to succeed. If we expect to capture all elements of agriculture in one big swoop, we will ultimately fail; and if we do nothing, we will fail. Let's get to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Just a reminder to Members, please seek unanimous consent. Keep an eye on the clock. It's going over quite a bit here. Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DELIVERED IN TLICHO – INTERPRETATION  
NOT AVAILABLE

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not available].

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't able to speak about this last session day -- I was not feeling well -- so I thought I'd share my statement on International Women's Day.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, in honour of International Women's Day, which was officially recognized yesterday, on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, I would like to share some remarks to highlight this occasion. First, I'd like to share some facts about what led to International Women's Day becoming a worldwide celebration. The first Women's Day took place in the U.S. on February 28, 1909. However, that celebration was only recognized domestically within the U.S. The first official Women's Day on an international scale was held two years later in March 1911 in Germany, Austria, and in Denmark.

2020 marks the 111<sup>th</sup> global commemoration for women, as International Women's Day was first celebrated in 1909. This day was meant to celebrate social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. This day is about calling out the many injustices that women are faced with every day, and the constant battle to fight for and safeguard women's rights.

While it's important, Mr. Speaker, to be informed about the many struggles that women must deal with on a regular basis, I'd like to celebrate this past International Women's Day by sharing a story about a special woman in my life, and that lady was my great-grandmother, Adeline Mandeville.

I remember, one quick story, before I went to university. I was going to a job in the TransCanada

Pipelines, and she told me -- I'll say another story in Chipewyan shortly here, but she told me, "Speak straight. Don't lie. Work out. Now, get out of the house, and go work, and I can live on my old age pension." "Go work," she said. She was a straight shooter, straight to the point, and I love her for that because I don't know where I would be if she was not like that.

I would like to say a few words in my language, and this is an excerpt of what happened when I was a kid. My great-grandfather Modeste was also there. We were going duck hunting. [English translation not available]. There was a gunshot boom, and I looked up, and I thought it was my great-grandfather shooting, but, no, it was my great-grandmother. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NORN:** I got excited telling this story because I have not told it in so long. To be very short, basically, it was this image of my great-grandmother: she had a bright yellow handkerchief on with a dress, and she had a shotgun, and she was shooting, and she shot a duck. I looked up, and I was so surprised, and I was like, "Man, that is one strong lady." She taught me a lot in life, both my great-grandparents, and I would like to say, "[English translation not available]." Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT PROVIDENCE HEALTH CENTRE CONCERNS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The residents of my community of Fort Providence are up in arms over the services provided at the local health centre. Most who I have spoken with state they no longer want to deal with the local health centre and are reaching out to other health centres in the outlying communities. Residents are constantly being mistreated, misdiagnosed, and being brushed off for any assistance, even with compensation forms that are required to file a disability claim. Medical travel is in question as patient escorts are not being provided for serious ailments to people being diagnosed with cancer symptoms and injuries to the elderly. The residents notice good nurses leaving our community and are concerned. I had filed a complaint back in November 2019, with no action on the file since.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is totally out of hand and requires immediate attention. I will have questions for the health Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE ASSAULT

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. At the end of May last year, an inmate at the North Slave Correctional Centre assaulted a prison guard, and when I say "assaulted," I mean he landed more than a dozen punches on the guard's head and kicked him in the stomach several times when he fell to the floor. I am told this is the most serious assault on a prison guard at NSCC in many years.

The little that we do know comes from the court case involving the inmate. He pleaded guilty to the assault on the guard and for another assault that put him in remand, in jail, in the first place. NNSL obtained video footage of the attack, which was entered as evidence. We see the attack. Then someone opens the door the man just walked through, looks, and then closes it. A guard runs from the opposite direction, sprays the inmate, and then handcuffs him. The fallen guard is helped out of the way, and the inmate is escorted in the opposite direction by two guards. There is no audio on this video, so we don't know what was said. The guard who was assaulted was taken to hospital for assessment and released, we learned later.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice did its own investigation of the incident. I obtained the report by two departmental staff through access to information. It offers spotty information because large sections are blacked out. What I did learn was that the guard was not following the proper protocol for escorting this inmate. It is unclear whether the guard knew he wasn't following the protocol. Since the incident, the warden has informed staff that they have to review the corrections directives and standing orders and sign off on them. I also learned that there is no training for new officers that relates specifically to escorting inmates through the building, although guards are taught self-defense as well as how to arrest and control inmates. It's unclear how much refresher training guards get after their initial six weeks of training.

Mr. Speaker, there are some loose ends. Why didn't corrections have a third party investigate the incident? Were serious incident response protocols followed? None of these questions are answered in the blacked-out report.

Mr. Speaker, being a prison guard is a tough job. Violence is always a risk, so safety is a big deal. This report raises questions about how safe a place NSCC is to work. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
RENTAL ADJUSTMENT FOR AGING PUBLIC  
HOUSING UNITS IN NUNAKPUT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am riding high, and I am still smiling from last week's "yes" from the Minister in regard to T4s to using pay stubs. I still want to say thank you. You are so good to us.

Mr. Speaker, positive responses send important messages that the Minister is listening to our concerns on this side of the House and trying to work with us. I wish all of the "yesses" would solve all of the problems of my constituents' housing, but, sadly, that is not the case, Mr. Speaker.

In Nunakput communities, such as Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, and Tuktoyaktuk, public housing units in service were built in 1970s, 1980s, and in the '90s. We have very few new units in our communities, Mr. Speaker. Many units have been repaired or retrofitted more than a few times, and the majority of them still require a lot of maintenance and upkeep on a yearly basis, such as doors, windows, and the mould.

My constituents who live in these older public housing units need relief, Mr. Speaker. Many of them are trying desperately to get out of arrears, and that is next week's statement, how to get rid of all the rent arrears across the Northwest Territories. People are struggling.

On top of this, in Nunakput, we come from the coldest place in the territory, the most remote communities of the Northwest Territories. The tenants do their best to keep the units healthy and warm. A person who lives in public units built in 2000 and 2010 does not have the challenges of keeping the units livable; yet, they are paying the same rent, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I am asking the Minister to seriously consider lowering the monthly rent paid by people living in the oldest public housing units. These units have probably paid for themselves 10 times over in the decades since they were built. The lower monthly rent in the oldest public housing units will allow people a better chance to get out of arrears, to keep the heat and lights on and not have those limiters on for 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off, being able to pay their bills.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister please consider this recommendation seriously? Costs to government would be minimal. The impact on my

constituents' lives would be immeasurable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are you feeling a little tired today, perhaps like you did not get enough sleep? Well, that is because, Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, the government stole an hour from us due to the time change. The hardest part about this is I don't really know why. Often, people say it's about the farmers, but that is actually not true. Saskatchewan has not had a time change for years, and the farming is doing just fine there.

The true origins of this lie with Germany and World War I, as a cost measure to save fuel, something that is not even the case anymore as it has been shown that places with daylight savings time actually spend more money on electricity consumption.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to address that often people say that daylight savings time adds daylight, which is not possible. The sun and the earth's position is something we cannot change. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for daylight savings time to exist in the Northwest Territories. Just ask my friends from the Beaudel. There is plenty of daylight in the summertime.

Mr. Speaker, our neighbours in the Yukon have recently gotten rid of the time change. I believe it is time for the Northwest Territories to do this, as well. The last Assembly began this work. There was a petition with over 500 signatures requesting this. The Alberta government recently conducted a survey of its residents and found that 93 percent want to get rid of the time change. There are jurisdictions across the world finally looking at getting rid of this anomaly that we believe we can control time, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice, or should I say the Minister of Time, about whether we can finally get rid of this archaic practice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FOOD SECURITY IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. As noted by my colleague, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Northwest Territories Bureau of

Statistics released additional data from the 2019 community survey at the end of February of this year. I'll focus on food security, because I find those results particularly shocking.

In 2018, 3,407 NWT households, or 23 percent, reported that they were often or sometimes worried about having enough money for food in the previous 12 months. Many of these households also stated they had difficulty making ends meet, with 12.5 percent reporting both food insecurity and general financial insecurity. Food insecurity among NWT communities ranged from 9 percent in Kakisa to 60 percent in Behchoko. Many of our smaller and more remote communities are having a difficult time putting food on the table. Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, Hay River Reserve, Wrigley, and Behchoko all have 50 percent or more of their households worried about food.

It is totally unacceptable that people in the NWT are going without food. Planning and building roads, where less than 50 percent of the workers are Northerners, is not going to solve this problem. NWT residents need food security programs and supports, housing, and education. Put people first, Mr. Speaker. Building food security in our communities cuts across our government and should include actions such as:

- making more land available for agriculture and production;
- training in local gardening and food preservation;
- better support for food harvester support programs and inter-settlement trade;
- review of regulatory barriers and gaps to allow for sale of locally produced food in the Northwest Territories; and
- a real Nutrition North program that moves from rewarding retailers to supporting local food producers and consumers.

I'll have questions later today for the Premier on what our government is doing to build food security in the Northwest Territories and how our efforts will stop people worrying about where their next meal is going to come from. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING AND INCOME SECURITY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my community, the Inuvik Housing Authority wait list is currently sitting at 80 applications for one bedroom,

nine applications for two bedrooms, and 10 applications for three bedrooms. This number has not changed at all in the past few years, but it's the single applicants who I have heard about from my community who are falling between the cracks. There is a huge gap in service between housing, Income Support, and the private market, Mr. Speaker. We know that we do not have any vacant single units in the Inuvik Housing Authority, and from what I've been told by many of the constituents in my riding, Income Support will only provide a certain amount; the number that keeps coming up is \$600 per month for single individuals, as long as they are on the wait list for housing.

They also tell me that, when they go to make an application through the private rental company, and we all know the biggest one that is sitting here in Yellowknife and Inuvik, they are told that they are not eligible, as they don't meet the income requirement. So here they are, Mr. Speaker, homeless, couch surfing, and, if lucky, they get a bed at our homeless shelter.

Mr. Speaker, it puzzles me that Income Support will provide only up to \$600 per month for rent, or this is the message that they provide, knowing that the private market is anywhere from \$900 to \$1,350 plus power for a bachelor or a one-bedroom. Some of these clients are dealing with medical issues. Some are adult students trying to finish their education. Some are returning from treatment, once they arrive back home and have no place to stay. We as a government are not providing them with a basic need of housing, and this is unacceptable. I hear this from both the residents who are waiting for units and from those who are providing a place for these people to stay, asking: why is this barrier there?

Mr. Speaker, I understand that we cannot control private business, but we can control the Income Security Program to work with private rental housing to find a way to meet their income criteria so that, when a resident applies for a unit, Income Security can provide documentation to meet the need of the rental company. It makes me angry that we continue to create barriers instead of meeting people where they're at, to meet their basic needs. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON VIRTUAL CARE

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, medical travel is a necessity of life in the North. The prohibitive cost of delivering all services to all 33 NWT communities,

paired with the global shortage of healthcare workers, requires Northerners to travel to larger centres to receive specialized care.

Virtual care, specifically Telehealth, has been part of our northern care landscape for decades, helping the North increase client access and reduce costs to our healthcare system. Canada was an early driver of virtual care, but quickly fell behind other nations. Given our growing medical travel costs and the spectre of pandemics, such as the threat of COVID-19, now is the time to increase our use of virtual care. This will enable the GNWT to sharpen the focus on preventive care and to continue to meet the healthcare needs of all Northerners in the most cost-effective way possible.

Well-known northern physician and former NWT Chief Medical Information Officer Dr. Ewan Affleck recently co-chaired the Virtual Care Task Force, a national partnership of medical professionals focused on promoting and growing access to quality healthcare through virtual care. Their final report, which I will table today, was released in February. The Virtual Care Task Force identified five key national recommendations to help address the four main barriers to virtual care. Mr. Speaker, the barriers identified were specific, clear, and solvable:

1. Digital inter-operability across the healthcare system to exchange healthcare information;
2. Simple registration and licensing to allow physicians to provide virtual care across provincial and territorial boundaries;
3. Payment models for virtual care; and
4. Medical education and professional development for physicians and medical students as they transition from an analog medical world to a digital one.

Mr. Speaker, we are already setting ourselves up for greater success and access to virtual care. The Northwest Territories, I am proud to say, was identified as the jurisdiction that has come the closest to inter-operability with its electronic medical record system, or single-patient chart. In terms of next steps, registration, licensing, and payment models are barriers that can be addressed through direction from this government.

The demand for virtual care in southern Canada is growing to meet public desire in the digital age. In the North, however, virtual care could literally mean the difference between a person's access to healthcare or not; so not a desire, Mr. Speaker, but a need. Virtual care will improve NWT resident access to essential services in the comfort of their home communities and enable the GNWT to put less money into air travel and more money into

actual care, including prevention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome the visitors that we have in the gallery with us today. I hope you're enjoying our proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience with us, thank you. Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 165-19(2): ADDICTIONS TREATMENT OPTIONS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Addictions are a major setback in the NWT. We have among the highest levels of addictions per capita in the country. Would the Minister consider adding more treatment centre options to our clients to ensure that we're covering all different types of scenarios that deal with addictions?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services is currently working on a process to issue an RFP for proposals for addictions treatment. The goal of this RFP is to identify southern locations and facilities that provide addictions services to Northwest Territories residents. This will mean more choices for their varied needs. Also, it is hoped that the contract results will come in the early summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Is the on-the-land funding, similar to what we have done in Salt River, still available to all Indigenous governments?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I think the Member is referring to the on-the-land mobile addictions treatment delivery by Salt River First Nation that was done a couple years ago. Yes, the Department of Health and Social Services will continue to deliver on-the-land healing funds for mental health and addictions. This program is delivered in partnership with the Indigenous governments. Starting in 2019-2020, the department has enhanced the fund to add additional funding to specific mobile addictions treatments and land-based after-care. This funding is meant to support the Indigenous governments to provide the same type of mobile addictions treatment program as for the Salt River First Nation that they delivered a couple years ago. It is our hope that this type of

program can be a real option for individuals who do not want to leave their community.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Integrated Case Management comes under Justice but has underlying effects with addictions in clientele who are affected by not being able to get into the mainstream of society. Would the Minister consider working with the Justice Minister to ensure that both the Fort Smith and Inuvik regions get the Pathfinders to work with their regions and communities?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I think the Member is referring to the Pathfinders with the Integrated Case Management program that is currently run by the Department of Justice. The Department of Health and Social Services participates in this intergovernmental working group, which oversees the initiative. Yes, the department will continue to work with Justice to determine how lessons learned from this program can be applied to improve access to services in the NWT. The key is not about the Pathfinder positions in the communities; it is about taking a different approach to how the government provides services to its residents.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, a territorial transition house should be considered for the community of Fort Smith because of its setting, environment, and the traditional values and language that are offered. This territorial traditional transition house should be in a place where people can stay once they finish treatment in the South. Would the Minister consider building a territorial transition house for after-care clientele so the NWT would be more successful in making the addictions problems facing our people a thing of the past? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I agree with the Member that access to safe and sober housing is important to individuals who recover from addictions. Our department's mental wellness and addictions recovery action plan makes a commitment to work with partners to identify transitional housing options for people returning from addictions treatment. This concept is also included in the mandate of this Assembly. Yes, the department will be working with our partners to determine how we can establish transitional housing supports in the Northwest Territories. I agree this may not make addictions a thing of the past, but it will go a long way towards supporting people trying to make a change in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 166-19(2):  
AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Hay River, we have trees, fish, roads, a port, and agriculture. My questions will be for the Minister of ITI. Can the Minister of ITI tell me if her department is prepared to action the agricultural strategy prepared by the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. In fact, we are already delivering on a suite of programs under that strategy, including those under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership in the South Slave. We have evidence in projects such as the Riverside Farms, Roots and Ruminants, and the huge potato harvest from Boden Farms on sale at the Super A. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Next question is: has the Minister commenced discussion with the Minister of Lands on how to address the need for lands dedicated for agricultural use in the South Slave?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Yes. ITI is working with the Department of Health and Social Services, Environment and Natural Resources, as well as Lands, to ensure all actions identified in the strategy are moving forward. I can confirm that, under the agricultural strategy, these discussions are ongoing in the departments at the working-group level. We also are trying to be more proactive with communities when it comes to designating land for agricultural use. Over the last two years, ITI's superintendent in the South Slave has met with community leaders, is my understanding, to identify lands within the municipalities for agriculture. In Hay River, in particular, this is a really opportune time, as the town itself is undertaking its community development planning. We are going to definitely be working with them.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Can the Minister confirm whether she's prepared to address the need for legislation that will enhance and support an agricultural sector in the NWT?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I can confirm, yes, to the Member that the government is ready to explore all options, including policy, legislation, regulation, and programming to advance the business of food in this territory. We believe the demand for safe, affordable, locally-grown food choices will create businesses and entrepreneurial activities that will work to strengthen and diversify our economy, as well.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For this Minister, I am trying to have some theme days in Hay River. She is coming to Hay River, I think, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and it's going to be small business. I also want her to show up to Hay River, and the theme day then will be agriculture and meet with people. Will the Minister commit to visiting Hay River to meet and discuss agricultural impediment with producers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I was going to commit to having some of that discussion on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, but from listening to the Member, it sounds like he would like another day for me to come down to Hay River. I will commit to that. However, you may have to fight with the Member for Nunakput to get me there a second time before I get to his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 167-19(2):  
RENT SCALE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Rocky. She's coming to Tuktoyaktuk first.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for NWT housing. When the current rent scale was developed years back, was there any consideration given or any thought given to rent scaling on a newer unit to an older unit? Some of the units, like I said, were built in 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in the communities that I represent. Is there any possibility for the department to look at a rent scale in regard to monthly rent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation right now is looking at the rent scale and looking at the affordability for the older units. The newer units, we are looking at possible Indigenous partnerships going forward or stakeholders who may be interested in purchasing those units, but going forward, we are looking at the rent scale right now.

**MR. JACOBSON:** The NWT Housing Corporation currently is tracking the costs paid by the tenants in the units for the power, the heating fuel, and with other different units; are they tracking that?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** According to my department, we do take care of the fuel and water, and we do track the consumption of those intakes annually.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Would the Minister be willing to direct her department to undertake an assessment to determine the cost of living for the people in the older units versus the newer units?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Yes, I will commit to looking at the differences between the variations in our rent for the clients that we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a good day again. I am getting all that I want to hear. Housing is the biggest concern for me in my riding, across this whole territory. That is why it's one of the biggest things in our mandate, so I am really happy with the Minister, who is trying. She is making a good effort. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the assessment shows, and I know, that the older units will cost more, but for the Minister to address the rent scale accordingly when that assessment comes out, I will be pushing for that in the House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thanks, Member, for the comment. We will be reviewing these rent scales as we go forward and the variations between the new and the older units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 168-19(2):  
FOOD SECURITY IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Premier. Earlier today, I recounted some of the statistics from the latest community survey, where almost a quarter of NWT residents purported being worried "sometimes" or "often" about food security. Can the Premier tell us what specific actions this government is taking to build food security and whether we have any specific targets over the next four years? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Food, clothing, and shelter are, according to Maslow's hierarchy, the basic needs that we need to meet for people; so when I hear that almost 3,400 people, my understanding is, are feeling

insecure about their food, that brings concerns. It should bring concerns for all of our governments. What are we doing about it?

We do have things that we are working on, a range of activities, from increasing local food production to, of course, our agricultural industry that was just spoken about earlier today. Our territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan includes 12 actions on food security, including the establishment of a food security coalition for the NWT, so we will be moving forward on this action plan, as well. Then, of course, we are looking to work with the Government of Canada, constantly working with the Government of Canada, to get some input into the redesign of our Nutrition North. I have heard for many years that that is not working. It's time for the Government of Canada to hear us and make a Nutrition North program that more works for the Northwest Territories.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Premier for that response. It was 3,400 households, not individuals; it's a lot more individuals who are worried about food. Mr. Speaker, without a proper tracking system to account for local food production and consumption, it seems unlikely that there will be any measurable progress towards building stronger food security. Can the Premier tell us whether there is indeed a proper tracking system in place for food security in the NWT, and if not, will she commit her Cabinet to developing one?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The Member knows that, actually, the NWT Bureau of Statistics does track food prices in the larger regional centres, such as Yellowknife, Hay River, et cetera. They also, every few years, do a comparison across the communities, and from that, a food price index is calculated. It shows variations in the price of food across the communities. The question on whether we would track further than that, that is a question that, at this point, I am not willing to actually make a commitment to. It's one thing to be able to track how many people might start an egg-producing farm or a large-scale farm. How many people actually have greenhouses in their backyard, such as myself? Those would be impossible to track, but those are really important food initiatives that people have to take in the Northwest Territories. I grew up here in 1962, and I couldn't even grow grass; I never knew we used to have farming here. It's an initiative that we have to push further. We need to look at food production in all areas, whether it's in harvesting to growing your own crops. However, to be able to take numbers on all of that, like I said, the backyard farmers, it would be a little bit more difficult.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Premier for that. Look, prices do have a relation to food security, but I asked about food production: do we have a way of

measuring food production and consumption of local foods? I don't think it's impossible to track. We have a greenhouse in our front yard, as well. We can survey people and get a better idea of this.

I want to make it a little easier for the Premier with the next question, ask her about an area that she should be familiar with, and that is Nutrition North. Can the Premier tell us, specifically, what action is being undertaken by the federal government and our government to redesign Nutrition North?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Right now, I cannot say, honestly, what is being done at this point. There has just been a new election within the Northwest Territories and, of course, federally, there was a new election that just happened, too. We have done initial meetings with our Ministers and the Prime Minister. I will be meeting again with the Prime Minister this week. However, it isn't something that we have actually said, "Here's an action plan on it."

Nutrition North is not working in the Northwest Territories. I did not have to come into the Legislature to hear that. I have heard it for many years. What I can commit to is that I will be bringing it forward to the Minister for the North. It is in our Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. I will continue to advocate for it, as well as all of the other issues that we have in the Northwest Territories.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. I am just a little bit perturbed that Nutrition North needs to be redesigned but that we don't really have any ideas about how to do that. I hope the Premier can put something together fairly quickly and get that ready and work with this side of the House.

Building food security is going to take a lot of effort from this government, and it's going to cut across many departments. For example, food security can and should include greater support for community harvesters and local food production. Can the Premier tell us what the best programs are to support community harvesting and local food production and whether these will be increased over the next four years?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I cannot stand here and say what the best program is. What I can say is that we have a variety of programs across the departments. For example, our anti-poverty fund gives \$1 million a year in contributions; last year, in 2019-2020, we supported 31 food security projects. Our healthy children's fund provides \$400,000 a year; that gave a total of seven security



projects through this fund. Thirteen food security projects were supported through the Small Community Homelessness Fund. The Healthy Food for Learning program, and this is one is a big one for me, supports all 49 schools in the Northwest Territories for healthy foods for children. The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a federal partnership; it gives a million dollars a year to advance community food development. ITI has the Northern Food Development Program to support producers of fish, meat, and other food products. We are revitalizing the Great Slave Lake fishery; I think that is an important one. The Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan supports land-based initiatives, including harvesting. We have a Community Harvesters Assistance Program, and we are looking at a mentorship program, as well. As well, the Indigenous governments asked for a hunter education program to support safe hunting.

I can't say which one of them is all important. What I can say, is that not one food source works for all people. Some people are very traditional. Some people are hunters and gatherers. Some people want to go to our grocery store. We need to look right across the gamut to ensure food security. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 169-19(2):  
FORT PROVIDENCE HEALTH CENTRE

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the health Minister regarding concerns raised by local residents of the health centre. Mr. Speaker, I've raised this issue with the Minister on February 27, 2020, on the same issue: the issues that residents are having with nurse practitioners at the local health centre. This continues to be a serious issue. Residents want action, and they want action now. Can the Minister provide assurances to the residents of Fort Providence that this issue can be looked to as soon as possible? Mahsi.

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member and I are having discussions right now with some of his concerns. He's raised concerns, and I'm working with my department and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority to have a discussion on the Member's concern.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Nurse practitioners are left to their own devices, so to speak. Can the Minister provide assurances and action to develop an evaluation program for health centre nurse practitioners for the small communities?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I am not sure what that means, but I will look into what the Member is referring to. I do want to talk a little bit about the primary healthcare reform. This is something that the department is working on. It's a long-term commitment, and it will take time to achieve system-wide cultural change. The primary healthcare reform is an initiative that we are advancing, with cultural safety and relationship care as key priorities for Health and Social Services.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** I think the evaluation program that I am referencing is in relation to evaluations of nurse practitioners and how they conduct their work within the communities. That's what I was referring to. I understand that complaints are filed with the Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. I, myself, have filed a complaint on behalf of several residents back in November 2019. There has been no action on this file, no notices or acknowledgments that they were received from that association. The Minister stated on February 27, 2020, that the department does conduct internal investigations made against health centre staff. Will the Minister conduct an immediate investigation into the allegations against the health centre nurse practitioners?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The Member is talking about an HR issue, and it is something that our department is looking into. We'll respond back to the Member; however, I'm not prepared to discuss any human resource issues on the floor today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 170-19(2):  
INCOME ASSISTANCE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECE. Can the Minister confirm if there is a maximum of \$600 per month for single individuals for rent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that there is not a \$600 cap for rent payable for Income Assistance clients. There was a cap that was changed back in April of 2018. I think, at that time, the cap for single individuals was \$900, but that is long since gone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you to the Minister for that. Can the Minister commit to having his department ensure that residents are eligible for rental

subsidies that meet the actual cost of the market rent in the community where they applied?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** If a client is eligible for Income Assistance, then they are eligible for the rent and other utilities. It's not a commitment I need to make; it's something that's in the legislation currently.

**MS. SEMMLER:** With the answers of the previous two, will the Minister commit to making sure that his departments are giving accurate information out to clients, or doing some type of information for us as MLAs, or other agencies that may be helping clients with different instances like income support, because we are the Integrated Case Management workers, so that we can make sure we can provide the right information as well?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The Member has brought this issue to my attention, and the department is going to look into what's happening in the Beaufort-Delta, follow up there, and find out where this information's coming from. A lot of this information is publicly available. I can have it sent to the Member, but there is a plain language handbook online, and there is actually the policy manual used in the offices available online, as well, that has the legislation in there, and the description of how that legislation is interpreted. I can share all of that for the Members because I know, as a Regular Member, especially, one who is always in their constituency, you get a lot of Income Assistance questions and concerns. My copies in my constituency office are well worn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for providing that, although the majority of the people that are usually helping clients in our communities, sometimes, they don't have access to computers, and sometimes they don't have access to providing this material. I have one last question. Will the Minister commit to have his department work with the rental companies, to be able to meet the rental application for the financial commitment? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** That is something that is supposed to happen, and I will follow up and make sure that that is happening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 171-19(2):  
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to commend all the people of the Yukon who woke up and will never have to change their clocks ever again. It seems what happens here, there's a bit of a gridlock here where Alberta is looking to doing this once again. BC is, California is, and no one seems to want to move. My question for the Minister of Justice is: can we take the lead and get rid of time change?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I'm still the Minister responsible for "Justice" and not taking on the mantle of "Time." Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to confirm that staff within the Department of Justice are actively involved with their counterparts. We are keeping tabs of what's happening. We're aware of the progress that seems to be taking place in a lot of other jurisdictions, moving away from time changing. I'm not going to stand here today and say that we will take the lead, but I can say the department is right now quite active on this. If there's an opportunity to take the lead, then, we would look at that, but at the moment, we're going to continue to engage and see what is happening with our partners immediately to the south, as well as in other jurisdictions in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Not quite the answer I was looking for. I recognize one of the barriers to the Northwest Territories doing this is that Alberta is our largest trading partner, and there's a general desire to be on the same time zone as Alberta. One of my concerns is that they're going out and doing this work right now, and I don't want to get left behind where, all of a sudden, we're not caught up to make sure we can implement this change. I guess what I'm looking for is: is the Minister of Justice prepared to commit that, should Alberta change and get rid of the time zone, we will do so as well?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I was also privy to the news articles about the change in the Yukon. I can assure the Member that the Department of Justice is well aware of what's happening and well aware of the need to be reactive now and not later. What I can certainly say at this point is that, should Alberta make a change, we will be in a position to respond very quickly. It's not a response that would be mine alone, and so that's my inability to commit to that here today on the floor, but for whatever assurance I can give, if there's a change, we will not be delayed in our response.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Given that we want to get this right and given that I think there is overwhelming public support to get this done, I mean, based on everyone I've talked to, could the Minister commit that we will begin some formal public engagement,

reach out to the relevant stakeholders such as Alberta, such as the airline industry, and start the steps forward to prepare us to make that change?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I am happy to commit and confirm that we will reach out to our legal counterparts in the other jurisdictions. We will reach out to stakeholders such as airlines, such as computer service providers. As far as public engagement, I think I would be a little more hesitant there in that that can mean a lot of different things depending on the nature of the bill. This change would involve a change to regulations. This is not a change that requires a legislative change; it is the Daylight Savings Time Regulations, I think, I'm not sure if that's quite right, so it's a fairly narrow change that would need to take place. That doesn't necessarily or typically require public engagement, but, to the extent that there are stakeholders and relevant stakeholders that we need to engage with, yes, I will commit to making that motion now.

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

QUESTION 172-19(2):  
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX  
ASSAULT

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice about the attack on the prison guard at the North Slave Correctional Centre last May. Let me start by saying that I recognize that this Minister was not the Minister at that time. The report into the attack was conducted by two Justice Department staff; in other words, there was no third-party involvement. Why not? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular investigation, which was back in May, was not conducted by staff from the North Slave correctional facility, though the Member is correct; it was conducted by other members from the Department of Justice. The nature of the investigation into any incident is responsive to the incident itself, and in this case, this was deemed to be adequate and appropriate.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that the RCMP were called and were involved, and the WSCC was involved, so there were responses from a variety of different avenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister of Justice for that response. The point of third-party investigations or input from third parties in investigations is to strengthen public confidence in

the results. Does the Minister believe that that is, in fact, the case and would have been helpful here?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I am confident in the work that was done in response to this incident by our staff, by the Department of Justice staff. That said, that doesn't mean that we can't still, being a new government and looking more broadly at correctional services and more broadly at the work that is done by all corrections staff, always strive to do better. I can say that there is going to be a workplace assessment done about safety and corrections this spring, and that that is, in fact, going to be external to the Department of Justice.

**MS. GREEN:** The Justice Minister has delivered some good news, there. I'm not sure who does the external workplace safety assessment, but that seems like a very good measure. There are a lot of loose ends in this report. One, which is just not understandable because of the amount of blacking out, is whether serious incident protocols were followed. Can the Minister assure us that, in fact, these protocols were followed, given the seriousness of this incident?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** It's not uncommon in any kind of an incident that there will be areas of improvement. What I would speak to are, in fact, the improvements and responses that were made as a result of this incident. For example, there was additional training provided in January of 2020, so already this year, surrounding the kinds of responses that should be taking place. There have been discussions within Corrections and in the workplace, specifically around when and how to review policy and about refresher training, which does happen regularly within the facility. In addition to that, being aware of the need to be particularly responsive to what is a very difficult workplace, there has, in fact, now been an inter-departmental working group formed with human resources and Corrections to ensure that we're providing the very best staffing and staffing support to our front line, but also to the supervisors within the facility.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. The video, which is the information I have to go on, raises a whole bunch of questions. Why didn't the guard on the other side of the door intervene? Why did the guard on this side of the door not have another guard with her? There are many questions that this video raises, which there are no written answers to, in terms of publicly accessible information, or even through ATIP. My question, which I want to repeat again, is about serious incident protocols. I'm sure that the correctional centre has them, and I'm interested to

know whether they were followed in this case. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** There are certain forms of escort within the facility that require two guards to be conducting an escort, and the staff at the correctional facility are aware of that. That policy has been the subject of review, and that has been the subject of review by the staff and by the supervisors at the facility. I am confident, going forward, that they have looked at that, that they have looked at that policy specifically, and that the things that we've done since then, including training in January, including the inter-departmental working group to support the staff, and hopefully, also with the workplace assessment that is coming in the next month or so, that any shortcomings in terms of following policy will not be repeated and that, indeed, policies will be at the very best possible level to ensure the safety of all the people who are working at the correctional facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 173-19(2):  
MEDICAL TRAVEL

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Further to my statement today, I'm wondering if the Minister of Health and Social Services would be able to inform the House of how much the cost of medical travel has increased over the last five years. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last five years, our medical travel has increased in our department by 43 percent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what the top three reasons for the increase to medical travel costs are.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The top three reasons for the increase in medical travel -- well, she has asked for the top three; there are many. Medical travel is a complex program, but the top three reasons for the increase in the costs is, number one, the cost for transportation and accommodation has increased; prices for tickets and hotels are increasing. That's number one.

Number two is that we have a number of complex cases where patients require travel beyond Edmonton for more specialized care, and also for longer periods of time, as well as increased number of non-medical escorts who are accommodating

patients to travel and, in part due to changes in the GNWT's medical travel policy, to provide these additional supports.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I am wondering if the Minister can speak to what the department is currently doing to address the high cost of medical travel in the Northwest Territories.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** To reduce the need for medical travel, steps are being taken for residents to be able to access services in their home community or their region wherever possible. The department and the authorities are looking into identifying options to provide services in the Northwest Territories that residents currently have to travel south for. Some examples are injections for migraines, also the skin surveys, as well as allergy testing. These are some of the areas where our department is looking at efficiencies, as well as we continue to work with our telehealth care to reduce the need for patient to travel outside the community.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Does the Department of Health and Social Services have, or will it be developing, a virtual care strategy so that Northerners can have a clear understanding of the GNWT's view on its future role with Northwest Territories' healthcare system? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Yes, the department is certainly looking at developing what we are calling a digital care strategy. This digital care strategy will help us make decisions when to use technology to improve patient care in the Northwest Territories. The virtual care enables health practitioners to meet with each other and with patients over distance will be a key component of this strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 174-19(2):  
MUNICIPAL LAND TRANSFER

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of Lands regarding the transfer of Commissioner's land within municipal boundaries. One of the issues that has ran up is that a number of municipal boundaries are in dispute with land claim negotiations as if the land is claimed by an Aboriginal government, and rightfully so. In the case of the City of Yellowknife's request, can I just confirm with the Minister of Lands whether that includes any of the land in the Akaitcho interim land withdrawal?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Lands.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Government of the Northwest Territories is not contemplating transferring any of the lands to the city that are current with withdrawal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I appreciate that answer because I just want to make it clear: when the City of Yellowknife is requesting the municipal lands in their boundary, they are not requesting the land that the Akaitcho is requesting. That is a separate issue that the City of Yellowknife is not requesting that land. My next question is: I am concerned that we underfund our municipalities, and they have been asking for this land. I am concerned that the Department of Lands is then going to make the city pay an arm and a leg for it. My question is for the Minister of Lands: is there an intention to charge the city for this land?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** This land has value. However, when we are working with the municipal governments, there is a fee of \$1.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Despite the municipal funding gap, I believe they could probably afford \$1. My next question is: I believe that there have been some concerns about surveying the land exactly, in that Commissioner's land is in large parcels and is not exactly surveyed into smaller parcels that a city would often use. I was hoping the Minister of Lands could speak to any issues, if any, that require surveying before we could transfer the land to the City of Yellowknife.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** When we talk about surveying the land, that actually belongs to the city. That is their responsibility moving forward. It is their responsibility.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I just clarify whether that surveying that is the city's responsibility must take place before we transfer the land, or can we just simply transfer the land and then leave the city's responsibility to survey it and divide it into parcels accordingly up to the city? Is there an order in which surveying has to occur?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I apologize to the Member. Prior to transferring a fee simple title to the city, legal surveys must be done. It is the city's responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 175-19(2):  
HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE REVIEW

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 11, 2019, the Minister of Health and Social Services stated that the department received a full and final report on the Home and Community Care Review on September 16, 2019, and she also stated it had 22 recommendations. Will the Minister provide this document as promised by her to us MLAs by this session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me go back and have a look at what was committed at that date. If it's possible to share, then absolutely, we will share the document.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Just to clarify, that was the Home and Community Care Review. Will the Minister tell us if the review provides recommendations to bring our out-of-province NWT placements home?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Repatriation is very important to our department. If and where necessary, if we can provide services closer to home and bring our patients back to the Northwest Territories, that is very important to us. It is also a cost saving. I can have a look to see what's in the report again just to refresh my memory and get back to the Member.

**MS. SEMMLER:** After receiving the stats of the out-of-territory, by the number, I think we have 109 adults out-of-territory. Thirty-nine of them are in the Yellowknife area, and 27 out of that, those are the top two, but with the population of the Beaufort-Delta, we have 27 out-of-province placements for adults. Will the Minister look at finding a way to try and repatriate these clients from Alberta, wherever they are, to the Beaufort-Delta and, if not the Beaufort-Delta, at least to the NWT?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I think that is kind of the same question that was asked. Let me just re-answer it to say that I will get back to the Member. Repatriation is, again, important. The reason why we send some of our patients out is because we don't have the complex services that other provinces are able to offer. That is why we send them out. If there is ability to bring them back, then, absolutely, our department will look into that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a final question, the Minister may not have the answer, but if she could let us know what the total amount is -- if we can't get that today, we can get that at some point -- of how much we're spending

on these 109 adults out of territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** In the next couple of weeks, we'll be coming to committee to review our budget items, and, in my briefings, I've gone through my department's budget items. You know, we have a big budget, and I understand the Member is asking for the total amount. I've seen the amount; I just can't recall it offhand. I can have a look at it and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 176-19(2):  
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX  
ASSAULT

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions for my friend, the Minister of Justice. I just want to go back to the workplace safety assessment. Can the Minister tell us who is doing this assessment and who the results will be reported to? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had confirmed quite specifically that it was an external contractor, external to the Department of Justice, but I don't have the name. I will have to confirm that. I would expect that it would come back to me. As far as releasing it thereafter, I would first of all need to know the extent of it. To the extent that it's a specific HR matter, I would be hesitant to release names that are involving HR. To the extent that it's a broader assessment, I expect that that can much more generally be released to the relevant committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the answer from the Minister. I just want to inform the Minister that, in times gone by, we have received reports confidentially as a standing committee, and we've committed to keeping those reports confidential. I am concerned, in the meantime, about the safety of the staff in the North Slave Correctional Centre. The findings from that report into the incident last May suggest that the guard may not have been aware of the protocol he wasn't following, and he put himself into a very unsafe situation. My question for the Minister is: what specific additional measures can Corrections management take to keep their front-line staff safe?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I certainly share the view that making sure that all staff at Corrections facilities across the Northwest Territories are safe is critical. I certainly am aware

of the need to do that and aware of the challenges of working in the Corrections environment. I have seen and am aware from just my involvement in the correctional area that this is something that we need to be constantly vigilant about. Leaving aside this specific incident and the specific individuals involved, when I assumed this role, it was something that I was alive to and did, indeed, take action to establish the inter-departmental working group between Human Resources and Corrections in order to ensure that appropriate training is unfolding; that tracking of training, both in terms of the correctional side of training, as well as mental wellness and wellness generally, are all taking place within the facility. There is now a work plan for that working group. They are looking at appropriate training for people within Corrections. They are assuring me that, indeed, tools and resources have been developed and are being developed that look at, within correctional institutions, mental wellness and wellness generally are going to be available and, more specifically, that there is going to be Corrections-relevant training worked in that has a northern context and northern relevance. That is going to be part of all training delivered for new recruits going forward in the Northwest Territories.

I appreciate these questions. It is something that I think deserves significant attention, and I can certainly assure the Member that, as I have said, there have been a number of things changed already and things that are going to continue to change and roll out over the next few months.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the Justice Minister's comprehensive answer to my question. To follow up, I wonder how many front-line staff at North Slave Correctional Centre are away on stress leave or are being accommodated because they are unable to do their original job, because of this incident or other like it?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I will commit to getting a specific number to the Member. I don't have it offhand. I can acknowledge that, not only in our correctional facilities but in Corrections across Canada, there have been increases in the number of individuals who are off work as a result of psychological wellness, psychological injury. That is a growing concern. I am assured, somewhat fortunately, although there is work to be done, that Corrections staff are engaged on a national level with their counterparts to consider this issue, to consider what can be done to better support Corrections staff in the Northwest Territories and in Canada generally, knowing that this is something that has become a bigger and bigger issue, and we are going to need to take steps to deal with it.

As I have said, there are some efforts already under way with the inter-departmental working

group, looking specifically at mental wellness, and we will continue to be looking for best practices from our counterparts across Canada.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank the Justice Minister for her very comprehensive answer. I understand that the assault last May was unusual in its viciousness, but there are assaults fairly often within the North Slave Correctional Centre and in correctional centres generally, so I'm wondering whether the Minister knows or could find out whether there have been additional assaults since the incident last May? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I am assuming that the Member is referencing assaults on staff. Seeing that that is correct, I will find out whether or not there have been any further incidents involving assaults on staff and, in doing so, try to determine what responses there have been or investigations that may have taken place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 10, written questions. Member for Kam Lake.

### Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 7-19(2):  
VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on the provision of virtual care in the Northwest Territories. What does the Department of Health and Social Services consider to be the solutions to the barriers identified in the report by the Virtual Care Task Force Report, specifically Interoperability and Governance, Licensure and Quality of Care, Payment Models, and Medical Education, and:

1. What is the business case for increasing availability of virtual care in the Northwest Territories?
2. Will the Department of Health and Social Services develop either a Northwest Territories or Pan-Territorial Virtual Care Framework to provide equitable, timely and cost-effective healthcare in the Northwest Territories?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

### Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 4-19(2):  
ACTION PLAN ON CORE HOUSING NEEDS

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a provisional Return to Written Question 4-19(2) asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on February 13, 2020, regarding the Action Plan on Core Housing Need.

A complete return to this written question is not ready, as the information required will be contained in a report titled "Summary Results of Housing Investment" that is still under development. This report is expected to be completed shortly. The Return to Written Question will be provided by April 2, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to the Commissioner's address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 53-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 88-19(2): ALCOHOL STRATEGY

TABLED DOCUMENT 54-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 105-19(2): MEDICAL TRAVEL CLAIM FORMS

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to table the following two documents, "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 88-19(2), Alcohol Strategy;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 105-19(2), Medical Travel Claim Forms." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Kam Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 55-19(2):  
VIRTUAL CARE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCALING UP VIRTUAL MEDICAL SERVICES - REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL CARE TASK FORCE, FEBRUARY 2020

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table "Virtual Care, Recommendations for Scaling Up Virtual Medical Services, Report of the Virtual Care Task Force, February 2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 56-19(2):  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CORRECTIONS  
SERVICE INVESTIGATION REPORT

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the report entitled "An investigation report into allegations of an assault at the North Slave Correctional Complex" dated June 25, 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Infrastructure.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 3:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HIGHWAYS  
ACT

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, March 12, 2020, I will move that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021; Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021.

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I call the committee to order. What is the will of committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, Environment and Natural Resources. Mahsi cho.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will call the committee back to order. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021. Does the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources have any opening remarks?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, Madam Chair, I do. I am here to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$10.7 million, or 12 percent, over the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. These estimates support our fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending while matching the modest expected revenue growth over the upcoming years.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- \$5.9 million in additional federal funding to support activities related to boreal caribou habitat protection under the Section 11 agreement, new measures to support recovery of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds, and the establishment and management of three new protected areas under the Canada Nature Fund agreement;
- \$4.6 million in forced-growth funding to address increased costs with the UNW collective bargaining, air tanker contract renewals, and wildlife surveys along the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway;
- \$175,000 in funds to complete negotiations for candidate protected areas; and
- \$774,000 in funding decreases due to program sunsets related to French-language communications, the Bathurst caribou Jay pipe project, the feasibility work for the Centre for Northern Sustainability, and one-time funding received for climate change reporting and outreach.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly by:

- strengthening the government's leadership and authority on climate change through research and monitoring to help understand the cumulative impacts on our ecosystems and to ensure these are considered when the government makes decisions;
- ongoing work with the federal government and co-management partners to complete boreal caribou range planning and enhanced actions to support barren-ground caribou conservation and recovery in the Northwest Territories;



- advancing conservation planning through the establishment of two protected areas, Thaidene Nene and Ts'ude Niline Tuyeta, as well as continued work towards the establishment of Dinaga Wek'ehodi; and
- advancing transboundary water agreements; this includes our existing agreements with Alberta and British Columbia as well as negotiating an updated agreement with Yukon and the establishment of an agreement with Saskatchewan.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Does the Minister wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please escort the witnesses to the Chamber? Thank you. Would the Minister please introduce the witnesses?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today are Deputy Minister Erin Kelly, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations Brett Elkin, as well as Director of Finance and Capital Planning Joyce Taylor. As well, in the witness room, we have Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Nathen Richea. With committee's approval, we would like to move water up the scale because of a prior commitment for the acting deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does the committee agree if that is okay?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right, so does the Minister want to do that section now?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Right now, once we get this part done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right, so I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right, committee. We will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with corporate management,

starting on page 68, with information items on pages 70 up to 71. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to say one quick remark, that it's a pleasure to see this department actually get an increase in resources this time. That was not the case in the last Assembly, where each of their budgets was cut over four years, and that was not a great place to start. I want to ask, though: ENR has a strategic plan that goes from 2015 to 2020, and I am just wondering if there are plans to develop a new strategic plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, that is what we are looking into moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just provide a little bit more detail? Is the department going to prepare a new strategic plan or not, yes or no? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I will take that as a "will." I want to ask; there were a couple of things from the last strategic plan that I don't think have been completed. One was a regional studies policy under the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act. I know that this is federal legislation, but I guess GNWT has been delegated the ability to carry out a regional study. Do we actually have a policy completed for that function? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With your permission, I would turn the mic over to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, it is on a list of things that we still need to complete,

but we recognize the importance of looking into this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there a timeline for that work to be completed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, we don't have a timeline, and we are just evaluating our priorities moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay. I will be watching for that. I want to turn, though, to page 70 of the main estimates. There is an item here, Community Harvesters Assistance Program. It looks like it actually went down from 2018-2019. Can I have an explanation as to what happened in 2018-2019? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I'll ask the deputy minister to answer this part. Thank you.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If you look at the Community Harvesters Assistance Program line, as well as the local wildlife committee line, you can see that there were some adjustments that were made, although the total is very similar because we combined contribution agreements to reduce administrative burden. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister and his staff for that explanation. Can someone tell me just very briefly what the Community Harvesters Assistance Program is all about, and if and when it was last increased? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, I'll ask the deputy

minister to give that sort of detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. These are contributions to local wildlife committees that provide assistance and resources to harvesters, and the last time that that amount was looked at was 10 years ago. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Wow, 10 years. That's a lot of inflation. There have also been changes in wildlife populations, particularly around caribou, where there are harvesting prohibitions on the Bathurst herd, a number of restrictions on a number of other herds, so people have to go further to access different wildlife, different herds, to get food. Does the department have any plans to increase the harvesters assistance program?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, the department has been asked by our Indigenous governments to look at this program, to evaluate it, and see if we are actually meeting our needs moving forward. For further detail, I'll ask the deputy minister to add to the answer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. During our engagements to develop the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan in 18 communities and at three regional meetings, there were concerns that were expressed about how the funding through CHAP was put out into communities, so we've agreed to do a review of CHAP funding this year. Another comment that was made was that there was a real need for some harvesting mentorship programs in communities to support others to get out on the land and harvest safely and responsibly. We are looking into training and mentorship programs under the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me, this review that's going to be done, is it being done internally, externally? Do we have a cost figure for that review? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's done internally, and we haven't got a cost to it right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me, I understand that it's application-based or request-based, that the money does go to local wildlife committees. Is this an oversubscribed program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, it is. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Following this review, is the department waiting for the review before it makes any decisions about increasing the funding for this program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. No further questions on this section. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to the Take a Kid Trapping program, the uptake in that in my riding. It's really helpful with the community. Is there any plan for increases if people are not taking, like other communities are not taking advantage of that program? Are there opportunities for other communities to get more funding to do more with the communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, it's fully subscribed, so no; right now, people access it fully. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. How is the department, I guess, looking and making sure all the monies are being spent? I know, stuff like this, uptake would be really big in the communities. How is it being tracked so they're not losing money or having to give it back at the end of the year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is it's contribution agreements, and they have to provide reports as part of the contribution agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That being said, the contribution agreement, if they're not spending the money, the money is sent back. What happens to that money once it's sent back? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If it's sent back, it's going to be recovery for the next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's cost savings, I guess, for the department if somebody's not spending that money, then. The monies that are not being spent, what's the timeline on the contribution agreement deadline? Do they have enough time to resubscribe, for some communities to resubscribe to that funding for that year to do the expenditures, instead of having to, basically, give it back to the GNWT, and then, not able to spend it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, there has been limited or hardly any money being returned back, so it's subscribed. The applicants have been utilizing the money to its fullest. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to the community harvesters program

that my colleague, Mr. O'Reilly, brought up, in regard to that with the assistance program, how many communities are they assisting in that program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To get the full list, we're willing to share it with you, but we have a good chunk of 41 in 2018-2019 right now, 41 applicants. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's okay. That's good, then. It's not to each community; it's to the different claims group, I guess. Is that correct, Madam Chair?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is to different organizations, like hunters and trappers, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister, on that. Moving on to disaster compensation, I had some communities, camps and stuff like that, that, due to high water, some in the Delta, some in the coastline communities, how does that work on the disaster compensation, and how much is allowable, I guess, in regard to their cabins and stuff like that? What would they get back? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's application-based, but for further detail I will ask the deputy minister, with your permission, to answer the rest of the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. People can make an application. In the case of what you're seeing here, there were none requested. There were no claims requested in 2018-2019. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to that, I know there were some houses that got destroyed in the Delta. Some of my friends lost, I think, two or three houses. There was one floating down the river. I don't know how cumbersome or how hard it is to get the application in to you to get approval, and what's the timeline on that approval? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would encourage the Member to get his constituents to reach out to our regional offices. They work as efficiently and as quickly as possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list, I have the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions are for the on-the-land unit. Can the Minister provide me with whether we have staff in this, and where are they located?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, we do have staff, and they are based out of Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Are there any plans for this unit to be moved out regionally, as it seems like on-the-land, we always say everything always ends up in Yellowknife, and this is something that I would consider that a department could run out of a region. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have a lot of staff in this area, and some of them are unfunded right now, so presently we're not looking at relocating them to other regions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the budget for \$3.5 million, could you give me a bit of a breakdown of what that is being spent on, then? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that type of detail, I will turn to my deputy minister, with your permission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That budget covers salaries, wages, and benefits, and also covers grants and contributions and fees related to developing and implementing on-the-land activities, traditional knowledge, traditional economy, country foods, and public education. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, if it's providing all of those programs, are they travelling out to the regions, or are they doing that just in Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, they do travel out to the regions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I'm just going to move to go back to the Community Harvesters Assistance Program. Knowing that the Minister, or the deputy minister, said that this hasn't been reviewed in over 10 years, knowing what we know in our regions, you know, this is a vital program for a lot of our communities. When the deputy minister talks about mentoring and a lot of these things, I think that's what this money will provide to the regional wildlife committees to be able to promote more mentorship.

In this budget, knowing that it hasn't been reviewed, would they reconsider looking at at least raising it, knowing that the cost of living has increased so much over the past 10 years? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are doing a review. That's part of the process. If we need to, we will come back, after we do our review, to the committee, through the business plan and our process. The other thing right now is we don't have the additional funds to allocate towards that right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I know there was a wide review, and I know that there are concerns on how this gets distributed, but I just feel like the consensus that I've spoken to different Indigenous groups in my region is they say it's just not enough money. There is just not enough money to give out. You have stated that it's all used up every year, so we know that, without even having to do a review, there is not enough money there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a great program. We're not denying that. We totally agree with you. What we've heard from 18 communities and three regional organizations is to look at how this program is being operated and managed. What we've done is we're making that commitment, so we want to make an informed decision before we come and ask for money without justification. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. I have the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Here, in the House, I mentioned before about the cost of living, again, just to echo what the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes has mentioned. I mentioned here before that cost of living is a multi-faceted problem in the North. The cost of groceries is going up constantly, and I believe that this Community Harvesters Assistance Program is one of those ones that just helps. There is nothing but good that comes out of this program, and I think that the Minister really needs to understand that. Even for my constituents, as well, if there is more allocated to this program, it will help offset that cost of living in the North, and this program aligns with our mandate. This is one of those ones that fits perfectly. It makes sense, and we have to do whatever we can to help our residents, in terms of helping them put food on their tables.

I did have one question, though. I'm just listening to other questions. One question that wasn't asked was: how is this CHAP program allocated by region? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, I can provide that information to you right now: North Slave, \$89,000; the Tlicho, \$155,000; South Slave, \$180,000; Beaufort-Delta, \$266,000; Sahtu, \$197,000; and the Deh Cho, \$187,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Do you have any further questions, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh? Are there any further questions on this section? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was hoping the Minister could give me an update in relation to the Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations under the Fisheries Act, and any work being done under our corresponding Waters Act.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For details, with your permission, I'll ask the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are ongoing discussions with the federal government related to this. In fact, we have staff travelling to Ottawa next week to engage in further discussions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I could get the Minister to commit to just providing some more information to the appropriate standing committee on the status of this work. I believe the goal here is to eventually stand those down, if I'm not mistaken.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will make that commitment to get that to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, but, so everybody is aware, we are also looking at equivalency presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was hoping I could have the Minister speak to any work we are doing to expand guardianship programs. I know a number of Indigenous governments are looking to expand their guardianship programs, and that overlaps with some of the work ENR is doing, so I am hoping I can get a commitment out of the Minister that we will see more guardianship programs run by Indigenous governments with the assistance of ENR.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We work with Indigenous governments to help them provide the guardianship. We do not push it onto them. We work with them when they are ready, and we try to help them as best we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Now that we have this on-the-land unit developed, I was wondering if there were plans to update the Traditional Knowledge Policy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have actually already updated it, so now we are working on a traditional knowledge plan moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, so I guess I am confused. We have the Traditional Knowledge Policy, and can I get the clarification how this works? We also have a knowledge agenda action plan 2019-2024, which I believe is actually under EIA. Can I get some clarification on how the Traditional Knowledge Policy, the traditional knowledge implementation, and the knowledge agenda action plan work?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will turn, with your permission, to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The knowledge agenda and its action plan are an update from the science agenda so that it's not just science that we are looking at; it's traditional and local knowledge. It was developed in collaboration with many departments across the GNWT. One of the cross-cutting themes in the knowledge agenda is traditional knowledge. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my next question is: work began on the Forest Act in the last Assembly. This department also is responsible for a number of the devolution pieces of legislation, the Waters Act, EPA, very significant pieces of legislation and work to be doing. Given

the rush to get a bunch of legislation done in the last Assembly, I was just hoping the Minister could speak to what legislation we can expect to come forward in this Assembly and whether it's adequately funded in this budget, or should we expect to see a supplemental to make sure all of that very important legislation gets done?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The last Assembly, some stuff was rushed, and we understand that, but within the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, ENR intends to bring forward amendments to the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act and amendments and consolidation of the Forest Management Act and the Forest Protection Act in the new Forest Act. During the second half, the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly intends to bring forth amendments to the Environmental Protection Act and the Waters Act. Right now is regulation development under the Wildlife Act, the Protected Areas Act, and the Waters Act, and the proposed Forest Act, so we do have the resources right now to do the legislation that we are proposing to bring forth. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my next question, too, is: we as standing committee will be taking the Wildlife Act out on a legislative review; is the Department of ENR willing to provide assistance in that review that will be done by committee?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know committee has resources and researchers available to do that. We are just waiting to see what the committee is asking for; so, if we can help them, we will. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. Committee will reach out, and we will look forward to continuing to have those discussions. Especially ENR's legislation is at the heart of, really related to, Indigenous and Aboriginal rights. I was hoping the Minister could speak to the process we are going to use and whether all of these post-devolution kind of initiatives will be using a co-drafting process.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. ENR does something a little bit different. It's not co-management. It's working with the Indigenous governments moving forward on our bills. For detail, though, I will ask, with your permission, the deputy minister to give you further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. ENR plans to continue with the partnership drafting approach that was used during the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. ENR, ITI, and Lands, led by the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, are collaborating and working to formalize a protocol to engage the intergovernmental council for the future development of lands and natural resources legislation. We also plan to pilot a collaborative engagement process with Indigenous governments and organizations, for the development of regulations that would be similar to the partnership approach we used in the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly for legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that that process will continue, and I look forward to hearing more about piloting it for regulations, too, because there are a number of very important regulations that this department has. I guess my other concern is, in using this process, what happens is there is a very confidential and arduous co-drafting process, and then it comes to committee and, ultimately, through this House. As is the nature of public government, we can change whatever we want. I think that it can lead to some tension and some misunderstanding of who ultimately controls legislation in this process, so I was hoping the Minister could commit to, as that process is going on, providing regular updates to committee on the relevant issues in some of the places so that we don't just get a bill and not know what exactly has been extensively negotiated, so providing some of that, what is being discussed at the co-drafting table to committee.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. First and foremost, it's not co-drafting; it's a partnership, working with the Indigenous governments. However, in saying that, yes, it's about working together, so we will make that commitment to provide further updates on a regular basis as we move forward so that we all work together for a good act and bill, moving forward, for

all residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions on this activity? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 69. Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$14,464,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will move on to protection and waste management. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. With your permission, I would like to bring our acting assistant deputy minister, Nathen Richea, in and replace the acting assistant deputy minister, Mr. Elkin. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witness out and in? We will go over activity, water management and monitoring beginning on page 83, with information items on page 86. Questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Sorry. I need a minute. You threw us off by changing the order.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member O'Reilly, are you ready? Member for Frame Lake, I will have you go first. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I would like to ask the Minister: there was a lot promised in the last Assembly about completing all the transboundary water agreements, but I don't think anything was actually signed. Can someone confirm that for me?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For further detail, I will ask, with your permission, the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a signed agreement with Alberta, a signed agreement with British Columbia. We have an intentions document that is ready to go out for consultation in the coming weeks with the Yukon, updating our 2002 agreement. We are still in discussions with Saskatchewan. Nunavut has alerted us to the fact that they would like to finish their water stewardship strategy and, then, begin engaging in discussions

about a transboundary water management agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That is good information to have, but I don't think it really answered my question, which was: what was accomplished in the last Assembly with regard to these agreements? I am just going to leave that. We had a lot of discussion in the House and outside of the House about the Teck Resources project. The Minister had indicated that the transboundary water agreement with Alberta was going to protect us in some way. Could the Minister actually give us an explanation as to how that agreement will protect us from upstream development in the future? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will, with your permission, ask the deputy minister to provide that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the Mackenzie River transboundary waters master agreement, there is agreement among all Mackenzie River basin board jurisdictions to work together to maintain aquatic ecosystem health; manage water use sustainably for present and future generations; respect the rights of each jurisdiction to manage water in its own use; provide early consultation and notification; and resolve issues cooperatively and harmoniously.

In our transboundary agreement with Alberta, we have used the water stewardship strategy that was developed collectively with Indigenous governments as our interests, and we have an agreement that includes a bilateral management committee that facilitates joint implementation of the agreement that classifies transboundary waters, establishes learning plans, and sets monitors and assesses the meeting of transboundary objectives. It also shares information and provides notification and consultation.

Our agreements include water quality and quantity objectives and monitoring and triggers for quality, quantity, and biology, as well, and learning about ground water, as well as including traditional knowledge in decision-making and classifying water bodies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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



**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I have read the agreements, as well. I understand that there is some information sharing, monitoring, and so on that is required, early notice of, perhaps, activities that might be happening upstream. What is actually in there to prevent changes to water quality and water quantity in a way that is going to adversely affect residents and the environment in the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, I will ask the deputy minister to answer that question in detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have access to upstream monitoring data, which allows us to have an early warning system of change. We can track changes in water quality coming from Alberta towards the Northwest Territories border. We also have the risk informed management approach where water bodies are classified based on risk. At the lower levels of risk, like a level 2, we have learning plans in place. As you move up to level 3, you set objectives. Level 4 is, if an objective is not met, the upstream jurisdiction does what they need to do to return the water quality, water quantity, or biology back to below the objective. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That is helpful, but I am still trying to understand. Are there some teeth to these agreements in that our government could dispute or ask an upstream developer, the upstream government, to stop or cease putting something into the water that is going to adversely affect us? Is that sort of authority found in the transboundary water agreements? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, for that detail, I will have to ask the deputy minister to provide the information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The bilateral management committee is a venue for us to bring forward concerns. The agreement does not

stop us from pursuing legal means. One of the important pieces of the master agreement is that each party to the agreement maintains the right to manage the use of water resources within their own jurisdiction, provided that they maintain the ecological integrity of shared waters.

In this case, if there was a development in Alberta that we were concerned about, we would use the bilateral management committee. If we could not agree at the bilateral management committee level, we would use the dispute resolution mechanism that is built into the transboundary agreement. If that still didn't get us where we needed to be, we are able to use legal means as necessary. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I understand all of that. I believe in transboundary water agreements, just in case anybody's wondering. I do think that there is some value in having them. I just question whether this is really going to protect our waters in ways in which we need. With Teck Resources, GNWT did not intervene in the environmental assessment of that project. Can I have some explanation as to why our government did not intervene? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are talking some corporate history here. Again, I am going to ask the deputy minister to answer this question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the case of Teck Resources, the proposed Teck Frontier mine did not predict any impacts to water beyond the Peace-Athabasca Delta from the project. The EA panel did not find the potential significant adverse effects to water quality, quantity, or fish or fish habitat. We have the mechanisms through the bilateral management committee to engage in discussions and ensure that we have adequate monitoring of quality and quantity, that we are getting the data from Alberta coming towards the border so that we have an early warning system of change. That is the reason that we didn't participate in the environmental assessment process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the words of the deputy minister. She jumped straight to the conclusions of the joint review panel. I'm not sure I share all of the findings, or agree with them all, but I still don't understand why our government didn't take the opportunity to intervene in that proceeding. Given the interests of Indigenous governments, downstream water users, I'm still trying to understand why our government wouldn't use that process to intervene and express our interests. I don't think I've had an explanation, so I'll ask again: why didn't we intervene? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I'll have to ask the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly?

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At the time, we were negotiating a transboundary water management agreement with Alberta that included the provisions that I have described so far for the bilateral management committee; notification or early warning system and additional monitoring, including at the border. We made the decision not to intervene, because we have that avenue for discussion with Alberta. In other cases, where we don't have a transboundary agreement with the jurisdiction, like [inaudible], we have intervened in those proceedings. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. We will move on to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm trying to get a sense of what we charge industrial users for using water. If someone has a Type A water licence and they're going to be using millions of litres of water, what would we charge them? Where is that set out?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have that detail. If the Member wishes, we have an overall picture, but if he wants that detail, we're willing to provide it for him. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that there is a rather complex way we licence water and use water, and I'm fully

supportive of our co-management system. I guess what I'd be looking for from the Minister is kind of a jurisdiction scan of what other jurisdictions charge industrial users for using their water. Ultimately, I think, if you charge people for water, then it incentivizes them to use less water and adopt newer technologies that would put water at less risk of being contaminated. So, if the Minister could provide that information. Thank you.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Two things. The first question he asked, for a total, was \$55,000. The second thing, regarding that, we've already provided that information to committee recently. If committee hasn't received it, it should be there, and if not, then we will make sure another copy is sent. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, committee has received that information. I guess I'm trying to get a little more public information on this. Can I confirm that \$55,000 is the total amount we have received for all industrial users to use water in the Northwest Territories?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand the Member wants to make it public, and yes, he is correct; it is \$55,000 moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my question is: how does that align with other jurisdictions? I mean, if we're only collecting \$55,000, and there are millions of litres of water being used every year, is it possible to increase that fee?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** To understand what I believe the question was, we're within range. We're within range across Canada. We've looked at that. We've looked at jurisdictional reviews, and we feel that the information is we're within that range right now. We don't have a desire to increase it or decrease it presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That \$55,000, would we know how much water that entitles industrial users to use?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's very specific to the licence holders. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions on this detailed item? No further questions. Please turn to 84. Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$9,591,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We will move back to environmental protection and waste management, beginning on page 72 with information item on page 74. Questions on this section? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. On page 73, there is a reduction in contract services for 2020-2021, and it's quite a drop from the previous years. Can I have an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For detail, I'll actually ask the deputy minister, with your permission, to answer that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In previous years, this contract services pays for analytical testing that cannot be done by Taiga Labs and needs to be contracted out, so that's why we have some elevated numbers in previous years. It's also responsible for some of the equipment maintenance, which is why it's higher in previous years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'd like to move on to a different matter. As I understand it, the land and water boards set financial security through the water licencing, but recently, our government has refused to accept security put forward that includes both land and water. I'd like an explanation as to why and what the fix is. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I'll ask assistant deputy minister Richea. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Richea.

**MR. RICHA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and under the Waters Act, which is territorial, it is the authority of the land and/or water boards of the territory to set security and water licences and land use permits. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. With all due respect, that's exactly what I said. My time is getting gobbled up here, Madam Chair. I'd like an answer as to why the Minister will not accept financial security that is put forward by water licence holders that includes land and water. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To answer that question, I'll ask the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Related to the specific example the Member has brought forward, the board set a split security for land and water in the reasons for decision. All of the security was then put into the water licence and none in the land use permit. The federal government delegated the authority for land-related liabilities to the Minister of Lands because of the Lands Act. It is under the Minister of Lands, and water liabilities to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources because the Waters Act is under the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. The Minister of ENR cannot legally accept security on behalf of Lands. As such, ENR could accept only the water-related security. The company is pursuing an amendment to their land use permit to address this security issue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that this is a recent development. We've had devolution for almost five, six years now, and this is the first time this has happened where the

Minister has refused to accept financial security. While the amount here is not a big one, a large amount, I'm worried about what this means for the future, and whether the Minister is going to continue to refuse security that includes land and water amounts. How do we even decide what's land and water? Is a tailings dam, is it land or water-related? This is not very helpful, and I want to know what the fix is, because this is going to increasingly put our government at financial risk, and I haven't heard what the fix is yet. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To get into that detail, I'll ask the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The department has to abide by what it has put forward and the reasons for decision. We will certainly encourage the board to make sure that what is in the reasons for decision is reflected in the land use permit and in the water licence. If that had been the case, this would not have been an issue, so we will work with the land and water boards and encourage them to ensure that what is reflected in the reasons for decision is put into the land use permit and water licence, and then, this will not be an issue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is going to be a longer conversation than my remaining four minutes. Does the reclaim model that the department actually pays to have developed and updated, does it include a way of calculating, or making separate calculations for land and water-related securities? I don't think it does, but I'd like to get that confirmed. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I can answer this one. Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. The model does allow for separate calculations of land- versus water-related securities, and is that done on some sort of rule of thumb of 60/40 split, or is this defensible, legally, in some other way, a court of

law, or do we need to clarify our legislation in some way? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To get the full detail on this, I'll ask the acting assistant deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Richea.

**MR. RICHEA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The reclaim model as used to calculate security does split land- and water-related liabilities. Over the years of doing estimates, approximately 60/40 split between land and water has been the average, but it's site-specific and it's component-specific, depending on the reclamation plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the response, and that was my understanding of it, as well. It's done through, sort of, rules of thumb rather than any system that's based in legislation or regulation, and I think that's a problem. The land and water boards, they always come up with a combined estimate of land- and water-related security, and I guess, in this case, the one we're discussing, they didn't split it between the land use permit versus the water licence, but I think that's certainly not a science, and it's an art, and we need to fix this.

Basically, the only fix I've heard is that ENR is going to talk, in future submissions, will tell the board that they need to make a split between land and water, and that the securities need to be split that way. Is that the only solution that we have? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I think I'll ask the assistant deputy minister to clarify what he said, and to answer the second part with your permission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right, Mr. Richea.

**MR. RICHEA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To clarify, on average, it's about a 60/40 split between land and water, but it is very site-specific and component-specific. For example, some activities during reclamation under the liability would be 100 percent land. Other activities could be 100 percent

water. On average, it's 60/40, but it's not a rule of thumb. It could be different depending on circumstances. When we prepare security estimates and provide that to the board for its consideration, and setting the amount in land use permit and water licence, we do provide a land and water split. We work with the companies on the security estimates, and we work with the company on that land and water split.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess, with my 15 seconds left, this is a real problem, and it needs to get fixed. I haven't even touched the issue of prevention, which our government hasn't done a very good job on, and I don't blame any of the individuals at the table for this, but we need to get our act together if we're going to try to demonstrate responsible resource development in the future. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ENR. Did you want to respond?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is very passionate about this, and we're willing to work with him. It may not be what he wants to hear at the end of the day, but we're willing to work with him moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm going to switch over to waste management now on the same page. Currently, the NWT has one of the highest per capita waste disposal in the country, and so, I think having this conversation is a very important one, especially where a lot of the waste in our smaller communities is generated by either the government or government projects, but especially through construction waste. I'm wondering if ENR currently works with other departments to make waste management part of their procurement practises. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The short answer is "yes," but I think maybe the Member would like some more detail, and with your permission, I'll ask the deputy minister to provide further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the waste resource management strategy that we're working to implement, one of the aspects is a greening of government strategy. A pilot project under that that's going on right now is related to Sissons School with the Department of Infrastructure, and looking to reduce the amount of waste that will end up in the landfill by reusing and recycling some of the materials there. My understanding is that the hope is that 75 percent of the materials will be able to be reduced or recycled from that project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Is that strategy specific to this project as a pilot right now, or is it a blanket strategy that will apply to all procurement contracts that go out from the GNWT going forward? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, it is a pilot project, but we're trying to utilize this moving forward, so lessons learned to be able to do it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Is the intent, then, to also be able to implement policies and legislation that not only hold our contractors to account, but also hold our own practices within the GNWT to account as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, to policies. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to be consistent across the board. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Transportation plays a large role in the Northwest Territories when it comes to taking care of our land and our environment, and we have both trucks that come into our communities that are road-accessible, that come in generally full and leave empty. We also have MTS, which barges in product to our communities, and sometimes leaves empty.

Does ENR currently work with Infrastructure to see how we can make sure that we are leveraging

these transportation means effectively, to make sure that nothing is going back empty and to also make sure, if there is potential for us to put waste from communities into these trucks or onto MTS, that we're taking advantage of that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, to MTS. We work with them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you. Is making sure that we're using trucks that are coming into communities, to the best of our ability, to make sure that we don't have vehicles that are coming in for government purposes, leaving empty, are we leveraging that medium, as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For further detail and very specific to what the Member is asking, with your permission, I'll ask the deputy minister to provide that information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I can speak specifically to the barging. Many of our communities in the Northwest Territories have stockpiles of hazardous waste. We have partnered with Infrastructure to ship out, using the barges, hazardous waste stockpiles from communities. We could definitely look into the trucking aspect more, but we've been focusing on the hazardous waste and the barges to date. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. How has ENR leveraged the on-the-ground expertise of different private businesses in order to help solve some of the landfill challenges in some of our remote communities? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I'll ask my deputy minister to provide that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe some of that work still needs to be done. What we have are some advisory committees that involve communities, as well as another advisory committee that involves businesses, and others that are interested in waste reduction, and the solid waste aspect of it, we're working towards under the implementation of that waste resource management strategy that I discussed earlier. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I guess more of a comment. There are definitely businesses within the North that want to be able to share knowledge and expertise with communities and see the value of making sure that we're all as green as we possibly can be, and so there are people out there who would really like to be able to participate in stuff like this. My last question is in regard to banning single-use plastics and how the federal government has a goal of attaining that by 2021. I'm wondering where we are as a government to be able to achieve that alongside the federal government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. From January 15, 2010, to March 31, 2019, nearly 57 million single-use bags, retail bags, have been kept from the NWT landfill, representing about a 72-percent reduction, and we are actually working with, and I apologize, I don't know exactly what the department is, or the committee is, but we're working with the federal government on this. Oh, sorry, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, sorry. We're working with them presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We've seen some local retailers stop using plastic bags on their own accord and have just gone to reusing cardboard boxes or just insisting that the only option for people is to bring their own bag. In terms of the single-use plastic bags, is that something that our government would like to jump on sooner rather than later, and work with retailers to end that practice? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that type of detail, I'll ask the deputy minister to provide information on what we are doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned, we are currently working with our provincial and federal partners through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment on a single-use plastics roadmap, as part of a commitment under the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste. Our intention is to do some amendments to the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act and also look at streams, and which streams are most available to us for waste reduction, in collaboration with some of those committees that I mentioned earlier. The work is ongoing. At this particular moment in time, we would need to do some amendments to the act to be able to enable that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, deputy minister. We'll move to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like to commend the department on all the work they've done on that waste management strategy. There is a lot of good work in there. One of the issues raised in there is that a lot of our waste management facilities have a water licence but are not in compliance with it, so my question is: do we know how many of them are not in compliance, and is there some sort of timeline to get them in compliance with their water licences?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll have to get back to the Member with that information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I trust that the department understands the importance of that. You know, there is lots of work to do on waste management. I wanted to kind of pick up where the Member for Frame Lake left off. Presently, securities are set by or housed within ENR, Lands, and then there's a bit over in OROGO. I guess my question is: is there a reason that ENR and land securities are in separate departments? I recognize there is different legislation and those departments have responsibility for it, but is there any benefit to having them under different Ministers? Well, the same Minister, but different departments, in this case.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that type of detail, I'm going to have to ask the deputy minister to provide that information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The way that the securities are set up right now is due to the delegated authority from the federal government. Land-related liabilities have been delegated to the Minister of Lands due to the Lands Act, and water-related liabilities have been delegated to the Minister of ENR because the Waters Act sits under the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I guess what I'm getting at, this is the same kind of issue with contaminated sites, is that they lie within ENR, Lands, and then a bit with EIA, as well. I guess what I'm looking for is, you know, this is largely a political discussion, but whether the Minister is willing to look into if there is any benefit to keeping all of our securities expertise spread out in different departments, along with contaminated sites. I recognize OROGO has to be separate, and I recognize EIA has to have theirs, and I know no one ever wants to talk about corporate restructuring, but I was hoping the Minister could look into whether there is any benefit to keeping both contaminated sites and securities separate in ENR and Lands. I recognize we would have to, then, change the delegated authority or move some people around the departments, but I'm asking if the Minister is willing to begin that conversation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Right now, getting down into the nitty-gritty or into the deep of this, we have regulations that the Minister of Lands gets to deal with, and then those that the Minister of ENR gets to deal with, so we have those regulations there. The departments work together closely to address this, more so now than before, but for further detail so that hopefully we can get people to understand, I'll ask the deputy minister to further answer the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's important to recognize that there are things that the Waters Act is responsible for, other than securities, that make sense at ENR, and there are things that the Lands Act does, other than securities, that

make sense at the Department of Lands, which is why those pieces of legislation are in those two departments. There definitely is a close working relationship on securities between the two departments.

Following back to the contaminated sites part of the question, ENR is the lead on some of the work on environmental site assessments and other pieces of that, but many departments work on contaminated sites. MACA, Infrastructure, all departments have an interest in contaminated sites. These files are things that the government is working to make sure that we are collaborating effectively on. We understand the importance of both contaminated sites and, of course, securities and why there are concerns related to that, so there are special groups that have been set up within the government to work on these at multiple levels, the director level and the assistant deputy minister level, as well as the deputy level. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, deputy minister. Are there any further questions for this section? If there are no further questions, please turn to page 73. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental protection and waste management, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$4,473,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now turn to environmental stewardship and climate change, beginning on page 75, with information items on page 78. Questions? Are there any questions on environmental stewardship? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I would like to start on page 76, top item, climate change and air quality. Can I have an explanation as to why it's being reduced from last year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was a sunset. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Sunset of what, our funding or federal funding? Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was GNWT funding, and it was for very specific actions that we needed to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I am not sure what those very specific actions were, but I think I will have to move on. The contract services here on this page has increased significantly. Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Nature fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So federal funding is being used to buy what? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. \$1.066 million has been budgeted for the 2020-2021 for contract services; establishing, managing, and monitoring of candidate protected areas; nature fund cost-sharing agreement; cumulative impact monitoring; climate change and air quality; and conservation planning. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I will just leave that alone for now. I want to ask a question about Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program. What are we doing to actually facilitate a response and implementation to the environmental audits? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For detail, I will ask the deputy minister to address that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have been provided with a draft of the audit. We are looking at the recommendations and providing responses. Once we have the responses, we will release it, as we did the last time. Thank you, Madam Chair.



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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. What kind of follow-up, though, is done from year to year to make sure that commitments are actually kept and implemented? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is internal tracking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I did not have my earpiece in. Could he repeat the answer? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I apologize. There is internal tracking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Internal tracking is great. Is that tracking reported in any way? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, no, but it helps inform us with our next audit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That internal tracking, is that something the department is going to be looking at reporting, maybe, through the state of the environment reporting that is to be done under the Environmental Rights Act, or some other way? It's just that, how is anybody supposed to know whether our government actually takes the environmental audit findings and its commitments seriously and actually carries through? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can look into that through our SEMP reporting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to go back to the funding for climate change and air quality. Do we actually have enough funding in here? Is there a costed action plan that is related to the Climate Change Strategic Framework? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will, with your permission, get the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the action plan, part 1 actions, there is funding available to complete them; part 2 actions, there is no funding source defined as of yet. We have been successful in accessing some federal funding to do some of the part 2 actions to date, and we continue to look for avenues to fund those actions through the federal government and other funding agencies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I have looked at the action plan. There were no cost figures in it that I recall seeing. Can the department provide a costed breakdown or show what this \$1.9 million is actually being used for and how it relates to the action plan that was developed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can give it to you. Right now, it's program policy management, communication adaptation, climate change information and data management, adaptation programs, air quality monitoring, and that is presently where the funding is. Does the Member wish to have a complete breakdown of those areas? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That would actually be helpful. I know I read the mind-numbing 48- or 50-page Climate Change Strategic Framework action plan recently, and it was basically a recounting of everything that the government was doing around climate change. I didn't find it terribly helpful. There was really no sense of priority. I have no idea where funds are being expended within that action plan and how that is actually going to allow us to reach the pan-

Canadian framework target at the end of the day or even higher is what, I think, the planet requires. I would actually like that breakdown. Is that something the Minister can do --

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sorry. Can you repeat just the very end? I think it switched over.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister prepare that breakdown of the \$1.9 million in relation to the Climate Change Strategic Framework action plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We can read it right now, or we can provide it. Okay. We will provide the breakdown to the Members for this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I am not sure we are quite on the same page here. I don't want some sort of general, categorized breakdown. I'd like to know how much is being expended on each of the action items in the so-called action plan. That would be helpful. I would also like to know how that relates to the response to the Auditor General report on climate change. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will ask the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For clarity, the action plan was developed in collaboration with Indigenous governments, industry, and many other partners and contains actions that had been put forward by those groups that are priorities for them related to climate change. It is our intention that the Climate Change Council will work with us to prioritize part 2 actions. With respect to funding for individual actions, much of the work is being done by staff within the GNWT. The Member would receive information on ENR staff who are working on many of the action items in there, as well as staff from other departments, because the action plan is for all of the departments in the NWT, the climate change action that they are taking. There are many, many actions that are listed in there. All of those actions come together through a very large engagement across the Northwest Territories. Just the summarize, the Climate Change Council will help us to prioritize those actions. Whatever funding

is available, if it matches up to actions in that action plan, we are jumping on that funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Moving on to Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When can we expect to see air regulations in place?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, we are having difficulty staffing that position. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will take that as "when we get a person to staff the position," then we can go from there. I guess my question is: do our air regulations have any plans to regulate the amount of CO2 emissions?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is still under discussion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My concern is that the Auditor General, one of the specific things is that we seem to lack any clear authority of responsibility for climate change. If we know that the energy strategy is not going to get us to meet our targets and we know that we, as a government, are not reaching our targets, which I think, considering we are disproportionately affected by climate change, really is not showing that we are a leader -- we are a relatively small jurisdiction. I recognize that, but I think we all have to do our part. If we know that we are not on track to meet our targets, does the Minister of ENR have any ability to do anything about that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have offered to do a technical briefing as well as to get a technical briefing with the energy strategy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Listen, I get that I am probably not going to get the Minister of ENR to commit to a legislated target that is enforceable right now in this question period, although that is what I would like to see. A number of researchers have suggested one of the best ways from the Northwest Territories, given the remoteness of our communities and the difficulty of getting off diesel, is simply for us to purchase carbon offsets or to acquire the Power Corporation or other large emitters, industrial people, to purchase carbon offsets, which would then allow us to meet our carbon targets by funding other green projects. Has the GNWT ever purchased carbon offsets?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, we haven't. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Interestingly enough, we, as Members, are actually allowed to purchase carbon offsets through our CWAA to save for any flights we may take. Just an interesting fact for Members. I would like to see the GNWT look into that. Will the Minister of ENR -- I recognize that perhaps Finance, I don't know where exactly this would lie -- be willing to look in the possibility of GNWT utilizing carbon offsets as one of the many tools in fighting climate change?

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be a question for the Department of Finance. I would encourage the Member to reach out to the Minister of Finance to ask that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. I assure you I will reach out to the Minister of Finance and give her some more work to do. Sorry. No further questions at this time, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Moving on to Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. I am just looking at a page 77 line item here with the Interim Resource Management Assistance Program. Just a quick question to the Minister: this line item here, there doesn't seem to be any increases for the last little while, the last couple years. Can I ask the Minister why hasn't this been increased? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is the money we are getting from the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. What is his department doing to contribute to this program? Mahsi cho.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are administering this program for the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think this is important because it does affect Indigenous communities for unsettled land claims with help with their land and resource management. Is there any appetite from that department or from the Minister to lobby for more money, because it is important to help Indigenous governments in unsettled land claims? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, we were doing the review on this; then, we will go from there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you. Would the Minister report back to one of the committees with the findings? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the responses. Just one last quick question on this area: which committee would he be reporting to? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe we would report to Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, SCEDE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there further questions on this item? You still have questions? Okay, sorry. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I just have a couple of quick questions, actually. With the conservation, planning and implementation, page 76, I see there is an increase here in funding to \$5,263,000. Yes, it's the federal funding, some of it, but I know that Thaidene Nene and, forgive me, this is not my mother tongue, but Saoyu-Ehdacho are two candidate areas that were established, so I know that some of that funding will go there, but there are also seven candidate areas that are left to be established. What is the plan going forward with those seven candidate areas? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For further detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a conservation work plan, Healthy Land, Healthy People. It is coming to a close for that action plan, and we are planning to develop a new one. We are committed to continuing the work that is in the action plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** One other question here, too: I am just looking at page 78 in terms of positions, as well. With the establishment of, for example, Thaidene Nene, I am just wondering if there has been any increase in positions with Thaidene Nene, with this line item. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, there have been. If the Member wants, there is one in the North Slave, one in the Tlicho, and one in Sahtu. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't quite understand that. Thaidene Nene does not have anything to do with the Tlicho. Okay, so let me be a

little more specific. In terms of Lutselk'e, which is in my riding, I just want to see if there are going to be any positions as a result of this budget increase. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a position going into Lutselk'e, an RRO2 position that is going there, and Lutselk'e is actually out of North Slave for the department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the response. Just one last question: that one position that is indicated here in the 2020-2021 active positions, that is one directly for Lutselk'e, then? Is that correct, then?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, and, I am sorry. I apologize. I did not hear exactly what it was, but I think the Member asked: it's for four years, and it's through the nature fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Are there any further questions on the environmental stewardship and climate change? Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just request that we switch out our acting assistant deputy ministers and bring Mr. Elkin back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witness out and bring the other witness in? Thanks. Can you please introduce your witness for the record?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. We switched out acting assistant deputy minister Richea to acting deputy minister Elkin. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions on environmental stewardship and climate change from the Members? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 76. Environmental and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, operations expenditure summary, 2020-

2021 Main Estimates, \$13,825,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now begin forest management, beginning on page 79, with information items on page 82. Questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just turning our attention to page 80, fire suppression, I did some research on this one here. I know we had some discussions in committee on this. This is the one item that I think that would really, really affect a lot of our mandate items, and this is one that could fluctuate either way. It's hard to say. None of us has a crystal ball, but if we have one bad fire season, we could say good-bye to a lot of our mandate, a lot of our wish list that we may have.

In 2014, we had a really bad fire season. We had, according to the stats here that I have in front of me, 385 fires, and we had up to \$56.1 million in costs and about 3.4 million hectares of forest that was damaged. A lot of this line item here is based on averages, like five-year averages, if I am correct. I guess my first question to the Minister is: let's say we had a really mild season the last couple of years; we had a wet season, we have a surplus. Are there any plans for that surplus if there is a surplus this year? Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It goes, actually, back to general revenue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho. On the other end of the spectrum, let's say we have another bad fire season. I just want to get a sense of the Minister's threshold here to ask our federal counterparts for help. I would like to ask the Minister: what would the Minister's upper limit be to, say, declare an emergency and ask for federal help? Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is actually our responsibility, so it would be us that would have to be looking after this, our fire season. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Well, I am just a little concerned, like I said before. I want to make sure that we don't have to go back for a supplementary on this one. It's hard to see because we do not have a crystal ball, but I guess I will leave that at that. If I have any further questions, I will talk to the Minister in person. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Further to my colleague's questions, if we do have a bad fire season, and it is our responsibility to pay for it, and we blow this budget, how do we end up paying for a bad fire season at the end of the day? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We would have to come back to this House and ask for a supplementary. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Hypothetically speaking, if we end up with multiple very bad fire seasons in a row, if we are incapable of increasing our borrowing limit from the federal government, how do we continue to be able to protect the NWT from bad fire seasons, given that we are at the top limit of our borrowing capacity? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hypothetically, we don't do hypotheticals. We have to deal with reality. We base it on our 10-year average, and so that's what we're looking at. That's the challenge we would have to face moving forward, if we continuously have a bad fire season. At that point in time, we may have to go to the federal government again and ask them to raise our debt ceiling, but right now, it's a supp, and we have to be accountable for fighting fires. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I guess I was looking for our worst-case scenario, rainy-day scenario, but within the forest management budget, most line items are going up, and there is one notable line item that has come down; it's materials and supplies. I'm wondering if -- oh, sorry, that's purchase services. I'm wondering if

the Minister can actually speak to why that line item has come down substantially. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** In 2018-2019, we bought aircraft parts, and that's why we see a reduction in this one moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see we're pulling about \$5,000 in timber-cutting licences and permits, which is not that much. I recognize that much of the Northwest Territories doesn't have trees, but there has been, in the past, quite significant commercial timber operations in the South. Can I just get a sense of what the department is doing to, you know, look into further developing our forestry industry?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We actually work with communities that look forward on it, and so, when they reach out to us, we try to work with them. I happen to know of one specific case, which is the Nahendeh right now. They're trying to work with the department, and the department is working with them to address that, moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do think that there is actually quite a bit of potential in working with ITI to make sure that we develop our forestry industry, and there's a whole spectrum here, whether it's community wood lots or a person building log cabins, or the large BC forestry companies who have come up and harvested in the past in the Northwest Territories. I would encourage the department, or the Minister of ENR, to work with ITI to see if there is some potential economic growth there. My other question is: do we presently conduct any tree planting, or are there any plans to do any tree planting?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have one study that we're looking at right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We've had a number of really bad forest fire seasons and the boreal forest simply is not growing back to be the same forest that it used to be. Also, there is a reforestation fund. We don't require our commercial forestry operators to replant, like they do in many other jurisdictions. There has been a recommendation that reforestation is one of the number one ways we can fight climate change; also, it's a huge employer. I guess my question to the Minister is: do we have money presently set aside for reforestation?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To get the detail, I'll actually ask the deputy minister to provide that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my understanding that there is some funding through stumpage fees that could be used toward reforestation. There have been some issues in the past where it hasn't been very successful, and that's one of the reasons we're doing the pilot, is to see if there are certain site techniques or other things that could help us make it more effective in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have further discussions with the Minister about this. I also believe that the federal government, through its climate change plans, is looking at reforestation as one of the many tools, so I think, looking at the pilot that we're doing and leveraging the money that we currently have set aside through stumpage fees, that there is probably an opportunity to leverage some more federal funding for reforestation efforts. I'll just leave that as a comment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. If you have no further questions, I'll take that as a comment. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Just so people are aware, we actually have accessed that part of our study, so we are actually accessing money from the federal government and, from that study, we are hopefully being able to see what we can then access from the federal government moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions on forest management? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at page 81. Under industry development, there is a section on forest management agreements. Do we have any in place, and how many? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have two, with companies in Fort Providence and Fort Resolution. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to those agreements, what are they for? Are they for harvesting, research management, or what are they for? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They are for harvesting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I see forestry as a potential for development and a way to create jobs and that, so I also encourage ENR to work with ITI to promote it, because it appears to me that, I guess, living in the South Slave, I don't see a lot of harvesting going on; there is a little bit. I guess, in saying that, I would kind of like to know from the Minister: what activities, or to what extent are activities happening in the South Slave with respect to harvesting? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do work with ITI on this, and, from my experience, we work with the community moving forward. They're the ones that come to us, or the companies come to us, but for further detail, with your permission, I'll ask the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South. Oh, Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly; sorry.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Before tree harvesting can occur, wood fibre supply agreements with another business need to be developed, and they are under development right now. We're told that they are near completion, so we're moving toward the more active phase of the negotiations, and you should be seeing work in the South Slave in the near future. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the other question I have is, when industry moves into -- we'll use Cameron Hills as an example, or any mining activity -- and roads are put in, what happens with the timber that has to be removed? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, we don't know, and we'll have to get back to the Member for further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Seeing the time, I think we're going to take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are on forest management, pages 79 to 82, and I am going to give the mic to the Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. MLA Simpson asked the question about the cutting of the roads and that, and we were able to get the information. With your permission, I would ask the deputy minister to provide that information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member was asking a question about what happens when a road is put into a mine with the wood. It's as per the land use permit. Generally, it's put in windrows along the side of the road. Often, communities are able to access that wood, but not all the time, depending on discussions with the company. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. We will move on to the next Member. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I did have a couple of questions on forest management, if I can.

Page 80, there's a line item here. I think it's contract services, there's a big increase from last year. Can I get an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With your permission, I'll ask the deputy minister to provide that information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase is due to forced growth for the Electra air tankers and the Fire Boss, as well as some funding related to the conservation and recovery of barren-ground caribou for \$146,000, which is the Wekweeti crew. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. With the fire suppression aircraft, presumably -- I thought we actually bought some of these ourselves, so there's increased contract or maintenance or something associated with these? What exactly is the increase for those aircraft? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For the detail, I'll ask the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There's forced growth related to the air tankers, and we own the Fire Boss, but the Electras are owned by a company that we have a contact with, and there were some negotiations that increased the contracts that we have to pay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I have a different question. Under the Low Carbon Economy Fund, which is a federal program, I think there was some money in there for carbon sequestration, and I think, reforestation, possibly. Does that show up anywhere in the ENR budget, or is the department accessing any of that funding? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, we'll have to get back to the Member with that detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions on forest management? Seeing that there are no further questions, please turn to page 80. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$38,044,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We have done water management, so we are going to wildlife and fish, beginning on page 87 with information items on pages 90 to 99. Questions? Questions for wildlife and fish? Any questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think the Minister said, even in his opening remarks if I can find them, that there was some funding in here for wildlife surveys along the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway. Can I get an explanation of that, please? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is for caribou and grizzly bear populations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Is the department able to charge this back to the Department of Infrastructure? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Infrastructure is actually providing us the funds to do this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That is great news. Thank you. I wanted to move on to caribou funding. The Minister talked about \$5.9 million of additional federal funding covering a whole bunch of different areas. Then back on February 5<sup>th</sup>, I'd asked questions of the Minister around caribou funding for the Bathurst caribou herd. At that point, he talked about \$6.8 million over five years. I am just trying to reconcile who is paying what for caribou and how much and over



what period of time. Can the Minister commit to give us something in writing that lays this out more clearly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, we can provide that in writing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Just so we are on the same page here, is the Minister going to break that down by boreal caribou versus barren-ground caribou and, even within the barren-ground caribou allocations, if there is money that has been identified for specific herds or planning projects, that kind of thing, is that the kind of breakdown we are going to see over time, as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That is great to hear. I just want to poke into this a little bit further. Back on February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Minister talked about \$6.8 million over five years for barren-land caribou herds. Is this ENR money that was approved through the FMB, or is this federal money that he was talking about back on February 5<sup>th</sup>? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. New barren-land ground caribou funding, it was an FMB submission, so it is our territorial money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Wow. All that complaining about no money for caribou must have paid off. I didn't even know about this until February. I am really curious to know: does the Minister know whether any of that is for habitat protection? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just the one comment is: this was approved in the last government. As for the habitat, that

information, with your permission, I will turn it over to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is funding in here for communities to provide input into which habitat they feel should be protected. We need to still look at the mechanism for how that would work. That funding is not included in this money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Do we need additional money, then, to do work on habitat protection? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Some of the stuff we can do within. It depends on the mechanism. We may have to come back, but right now, we are trying to be able to do it with internal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that barren-ground caribou, barren-land caribou, are being considered for designation under the Species at Risk Act, which would trigger a whole cascading set of legal requirements, including a recovery strategy. Can someone explain when that decision is going to be made and what the financial consequences are going to be for our government? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With your permission, for this detail, I will ask the acting assistant deputy minister, Mr. Elkin. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will start by noting that barren-ground caribou, in terms of listing as a species at risk, are being looked at both federally and territorially. In NWT, we have already listed them as threatened. Under the Species at Risk Act, we have a timeline to finalize a recovery strategy, along with our co-management partners. We just had a meeting in Inuvik in February to do the penultimate draft. We expect it to be in place by July 2020. The federal government has not yet listed. They are still out consulting. Their recovery

strategy would be further down the line. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That is helpful to know. What are the financial consequences for our government? Is there money in here for the development of a recovery strategy and associated actions with that for GNWT? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have enough money to do a recovery strategy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Assuming that the federal government is going to find barren-ground caribou as a designated species under their legislation, would we be looking to enter into a Section 11 agreement for that species, as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For this detail, I will ask the deputy minister to provide the information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister, Ms. Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The federal government has nature fund money for priority species that we would look to access. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. We wouldn't be necessarily waiting for the federal money before we start to do something ourselves; is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, we have actually started the process already. We are ahead of the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. When do we expect to undertake the next series of caribou calving ground surveys, and is there money in the budget to do that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** June for Bathurst and Bluenose-East. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Sorry. Thanks, Madam Chair. I didn't quite hear the Minister's answer. He said June of this year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Yes, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes. Correct. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. How is that coordinated with the government of Nunavut? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We work collaboratively with the Nunavut government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am wondering if ENR or any department has some sort of evaluation of the monetary value on the meat that local harvesters provide their communities.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Presently, no, we do not. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that, in some conservation circles, there is hesitancy to put a value on wildlife, but I think, as we are going forward in this Assembly, looking at food security, and we are talking about increasing the harvesters assistance program, I really do think that there is a value to putting a value on what all of our caribou herds are worth to providing food security and then doing some of that assessment of

what ultimately that benefit in food security is, being provided by local harvesters. Would ENR be willing to begin that work?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With your permission, I will ask the acting assistant deputy minister to respond to this question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. While we have been working with our wildlife co-management partners, one of the key things that we need to know, and they want to know, is monitoring the amount of food, how much caribou do they need to meet their needs, and what is available. We do that work with them. What we have heard through our consultation on the Wildlife Act and others is that there is a desire not to put an economic value, so we try to do that work by estimating what is basically what they call a basic needs level, how much caribou do communities need to meet their needs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do recognize there is that contention here. To me, if we are talking about saving the Bathurst caribou herd and we can put an economic value that it's providing thousands and thousands of dollars of meat every single year ideally forever, I guess, I think it helps make those arguments when comparing a Bathurst caribou damage to nonrenewable resource projects. I think this is a conversation for another time, but I do think that economic value has some things.

Another, kind of, core of the North American model of conservation is to not allow market hunting, essentially to not allow people to hunt for the purposes of selling meat, which kind of goes in contradiction to what I just said about prescribing a value to it. I know there is some exploration of the idea of allowing our harvesters to sell the locally harvested meat and whether that be to restaurants. Can I just get an update from the Minister where that work is at?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. With your permission, Madam Chair, I would like to ask the acting assistant deputy minister to answer the question.

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

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, when we did consultation and engagement and built the Wildlife Act with our partners, we heard fairly clearly that there was not support for commercialization of wildlife, so that is actually built into the act, that you cannot do that. What we do in some land claim areas is we recognize the traditional sharing practices, and that is laid out, what that means in each of the four settled land claim areas. Department of health, I will not speak for them, but they are looking at ways to bring food into institutions, and we have been working closely with them to facilitate that, not through the commercial mechanism, but in ways to get people to donate and share so we can provide that to people in facilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do appreciate that, and I think the move to traditional foods in the hospitals is a good step. Perhaps that will somewhat commercialize the market, but I don't want to see that principle of non-commercial hunting disappear. I do think there probably is some inconsistency in the messaging that is occurring between ITI, Health, and ENR in regard to the market of hunting, because I have seen more and more push to allow locally harvested game to end up in restaurants or end up in markets. To me, I don't understand how we could do that without commercializing it. I guess my question would be: would the Minister of ENR just be willing to reach out to ITI and Health and get a bigger, fuller picture of how this fits within the principles of conservation?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have an interdepartmental working group that is looking at this and is trying to address this issue right now, presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, kind of, moving on and in a similar vein, we do have a reindeer herd, which is not wildlife, although it is the responsibility of ENR. Along the same vein, I question why I do not see reindeer on more and more menus, why I cannot buy it in the grocery store. Can I get a sense from the department of what is going on with our reindeer herd and whether we can tap into that as a food source?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for clarification, that is actually a privately owned herd. It's not a Government of the Northwest Territories managed herd. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do recognize that it is a privately owned herd, so I guess I will just accept that as an answer and reach out to Mr. Binder at some point. Madam Chair, I guess my next question is: presently, we have a fairly large no-bison zone due to a number of disease controls. I have actually had constituents reach out on the possibility of looking into bison farming. They also looked into reindeer herding as the possibility of getting some of those things, and right now, the regulatory process just essentially makes that impossible, is what my constituents have told me.

This is one of the issues; every time we ask questions of food security, I don't exactly know who to ask them to. When I ask questions about animal health, if it's not wildlife, it kind of falls to MACA, which does not make any sense. Sometimes it falls to ITI. Once again, we have that interdepartmental working group. Would the Minister be willing to have a conversation about the feasibility of regional centres, including my constituents in Yellowknife North, about how they could even go about possibly having a bison farm or a reindeer farm?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we can have that conversation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions to the section, wildlife and fish, under Environmental and Natural Resources? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I just see the title, wildlife and fish, and I am just curious at what section the fish are actually in here. I see lots of fur-bearing type headings. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. The fish are in the water. To get more of a clarification, I will turn to the deputy

minister, with your permission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This division, recently the name was changed to "wildlife and fish" to reflect the fact that we have fisheries responsibilities at ENR. We have an MOU with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for enforcement of their freshwater sport-fishing regulations; we also have the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program; one of the three valued ecosystem components that we do a bunch of research on at the department and work with partners on is fish; and our waters group, as well, works with communities on fish monitoring. We wanted to reflect that we do work on fish, and it was determined that naming this division "wildlife and fish" would show that. It's consistent with many other jurisdictions across Canada that have fish and wildlife divisions within their environment department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, now I know where the fish are. You said that it deals with sport fishing. In Hay River, I know that we have the pickerel runs, and our concern is that we get people from the South come down and the quantity they take is, usually, probably beyond what their allowed limit is. Was I correct in hearing that you said that your department will monitor, I guess, that portion of it, policing the recreational? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We enforce it, and we send officers when we hear concerns to that location. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there a budget item or a budget amount for the policing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll have to get back to the Member to tell you exactly where it is. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of monitoring, I guess, or policing that, how many people or officers would be in place during the summer, or during the run of, say, pickerel in the South Slave? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just our standard officers who we use for fishing and hunting, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** No, I think that's all. I just want to make sure that fish are protected. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Are there any further questions under the section wildlife and fish? Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one quick comment. In regard to your caribou monitoring up in the Delta, right in Husky Lake area, they're flying around with helicopters, they're buzzing; they shouldn't be buzzing hunters, when they're hunting. It's kind of dangerous. I just came to a couple of text messages in regard to that, so where does it say, with the department, when you're doing stuff like that, don't they have to fly at a certain level and stuff like that, when they're doing stuff like that, in regard to caribou monitoring, instead of scaring them? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We follow the best practices out there across Canada. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** You're going to start following the best practices by some of your officers who are doing their job. I commend them and all, what they're doing, and working safely, and stuff like that, but when you're starting to do that, that's almost a Member's statement, but for myself, that has to stop. You shouldn't be buzzing hunters, and in regard to safety and that of them, and your workers. More a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of ENR.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the Member, with that concern, if the

public has concerns about what's going on, please report it so we can address it, if there are situations, locations, and that, so we are aware. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions under the activity wildlife and fish? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 88. Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$16,688,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Members. Please return now to the department summary found on page 65. Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to see if we're going to address some of the pages, like pages 90 or 91, like the Environment Fund, that area.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Pages 90 to 91 were part of the last section. Just to clarify, those pages, yes, they are information items under the last section that we just went through. So, going into the departmental summary on page 65. Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 6-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 30-19(2): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2020-2021 – ENVIRONMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES – DEFERRAL OF  
FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE  
ESTIMATES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
CARRIED

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources at this time. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Norn. The motion is being handed out, distributed. 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. The motion is carried.

---Carried

All right. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. I'll let you go. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, what is the wish of committee?

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

**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.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021, and would like to report progress with one motion adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do we have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions

12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

- Motion 4-19(2), Request for Special Audit by the Auditor General of Canada on the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021

- Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:09 p.m.