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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
**(Nahendeh)**

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*Minister of Industry, Tourism and  
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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, June 7, 2024****Members Present**

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay Macdonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Mr. Nerysoo, Ms. Reid, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 10:03 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson):** Colleagues, I'd like to thank Annie Inuktalik for opening guiding words. Ministers' statements. Minister for ECC.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 49-20(1):  
2024 WILDFIRE SEASON

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 2023 wildfire season was the most challenging ever experienced in the Northwest Territories, and the largest and most impactful in Canada. Driven by severe drought conditions, record-breaking temperatures and periods of extreme wind conditions, both the fire behaviour and fire environment were unlike anything our most experienced firefighters have ever seen before.

To date, forecasts of another challenging fire season in 2024 have been accurate, with a very early start to the season and a number of significant fires near communities and highways in the Deh Cho and South Slave regions.

The NWT is experiencing its third consecutive year of severe drought, which is fueling this fire risk. We only need to look at our lakes and rivers to see how this drought is impacting the environment. Until significant rain is experienced, the job firefighters face in trying to contain wildfires will remain very difficult.

Mr. Speaker, despite these challenges, the Department of Environment and Climate Change has worked hard over the past winter to be ready for the 2024 wildfire season. Over the past several months, meetings with local community and Indigenous governments occurred in all forested communities in the NWT to discuss the 2023 wildfire season, community wildfire protection plans and local planning for the 2024 season. We assisted the

NWT Association of Communities in their successful application for federal funding to support community-led wildfire prevention and mitigation work, including FireSmart initiatives. Communication and notification processes for wildfire events have been strengthened in collaboration with the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Executive and Indigenous Affairs resulting in an enhanced approach to provide direct and timely information to Indigenous governments about fires that have the potential to impact their communities.

Training has also been top of mind over the past several months. Additional fire crews and aircraft were added to our normal complement and brought on much earlier than normal to complete their annual training and be ready for an early start to the season. Home ignition zone training was offered to Environment and Climate Change staff and local fire departments. Furthermore, to help address fires at the wildland-urban interface, cross-training is underway for local fire departments, with some events recently held in May.

A new wildfire prevention and mitigation unit has been established with a number of wildfire prevention activities already conducted across the NWT. Information guides were developed to provide people with detailed advice on best practices and procedures to FireSmart their property, and information events were held with communities, neighborhood groups, schools, and other parties to increase public awareness.

New structural protection trailers with sprinklers, pumps and hose are being deployed to each region which will increase the number of homes and cabins that can be protected should the need arise. As soon as the snow was gone, a specialized thermal detection aircraft was used to scan for hotspots near communities from last year's fires.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that these preparations were very helpful as we faced an early start to the 2024 wildfire season. The early season scanning for hotspots found eight fires that burned through the winter, and crews were brought on early to address them. All but two of

the fires were extinguished right away however extreme drought conditions and strong winds made it very difficult to contain two of the fires.

One of these fires posed a threat to Liard for a number of weeks but the hard work and commitment of our firefighters resulted in containing the fire in the end and avoiding the need for an evacuation, like what happened in nearby Fort Nelson.

Environment and Climate Change put fire restrictions in place in the Deh Cho and South Slave regions early in May based on the wildfire forecasts, current wildfire environment, and potential threat to communities. These restrictions are an important tool to help prevent human-caused fires and allow firefighters to focus on the fires they are dealing with and reduce the worry about new fires starting close to communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know there is a lot of interest in seeing the 2023 Wildfire Response Review. A final report is close to being released publicly, and it will include recommendations and suggestions for improvement. This report will also include a What We Heard report, which reflects the input of GNWT operational staff, local community and Indigenous governments, as well as members of the public who were involved in last year's fire response. The review covered all of the 2023 wildfire season but also included a deep dive on the wildfires that impacted Enterprise, Hay River, and K'atlodeeche First Nation, as well as the fires that threatened Behchoko and Yellowknife. I look forward to using this review to further enhance our wildfire management program, including during the 2024 season.

Looking ahead, I am also happy to announce that Environment and Climate Change has developed its own Wildfire Prevention and Resilience Strategy which will complement a new national wildfire prevention and mitigation strategy. The NWT's strategy will guide a number of targeted new activities to protect our communities, including establishing territorial and regional FireSmart committees, delivering cross-training for wildfire and structural firefighters, expanding the prescribed fire program to reduce risks at community and landscape levels, and supporting Indigenous-led cultural burning initiatives to return traditional fire to the landscape. The strategy will also include enhanced public education and communication efforts, increased wildfire emergency planning, and improved legislation through regulation development with the new Forest Act.

The current drought, warm temperatures and elevated fire risk are expected to continue

throughout much of the summer, and everyone needs to do their part to prevent human-caused fires. We need to work together to help protect NWT residents, communities, critical infrastructure, and values. We ask that people only use fire on the land if needed for cooking or heat. If you need to make a fire, make sure it is as small as possible and ensure that you have the tools needed to contain it and put it out.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to respond to another challenging wildfire season, I would like to thank all the people, communities, and organizations that have stepped up to do what they can to help prevent or mitigate the risk of wildfire. I also want to extend my heartfelt thank yous to our amazing fire crews and wildfire management teams who are working tirelessly to keep you all safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 50-20(1): IMMIGRATION

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly was clear in its desire to work together to build a strong economic foundation. Establishing a sustainable and truly strong foundation needs to be an all of territory effort, supporting the growth and evolution of all education and skill development sectors from early learning to post-secondary learning and trades economy to care economy. But Mr. Speaker, we know that our economic vision is bigger than just us. Like many jurisdictions across the country, attracting new skilled residents is part of building a strong economic foundation.

Earlier this year, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment engaged with the public, employers, and stakeholders on the Northwest Territories Immigration Strategy. This feedback highlighted immigration growth and trends that will help shape our next steps.

We heard that residents feel immigration is an important economic tool that has many benefits for the Northwest Territories. For example, immigration allows employers to hire qualified staff when there are labour shortages that can lead to consistency, retention and, ultimately, business growth.

The Northwest Territories Nominee Program is the immigration program delivered collaboratively by the GNWT and the Government of Canada that helps fill these labour shortages by attracting a skilled workforce while supporting foreign nationals

with a pathway to becoming permanent residents of Canada through valuable work experience. This program also serves to empower eligible foreign nationals who want to invest in a business in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time ever, we are on track to potentially reach the NWT's federal allocation of 300 nominees this calendar year, exceeding previous annual numbers. Our target, Mr. Speaker, is to increase overall program usage and to hit our maximum allocation in the territory every year.

With immigration, we will continue to attract a skilled workforce and reap the additional benefits that come with immigration, including a vibrant and diversified population. This will help ensure our economy remains competitive with enhanced immigration being a key component to overall population growth and long-term economic development and prosperity. This is great news, Mr. Speaker, but the engagements also highlighted areas where we can do better.

We want to continually improve accessibility and ease of use of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. As part of our mandate, this government committed to making GNWT programs and services more accessible to NWT residents through person-centered approaches that prioritizes ease of access for residents over ease of administration. As Minister, I have given direction to both the departments I am responsible for to work together to consolidate immigration services as a single-service window through Education, Culture and Employment. By administering these programs under one roof, we will streamline services, consolidate our human resource capacity, and provide better supports to nominees and business owners alike.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there is a need for expanded supports and resources to help newcomers settle and integrate into life in the Northwest Territories. This will require a collaborative effort between the Government of Canada, GNWT departments, community organizations, settlement service providers, and employers to ensure that comprehensive support networks are in place to ensure we are not only attracting new residents to the NWT but supporting them to plant roots that make the NWT home for a long time to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 260-20(1): PLASTIC WASTE

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak to an environmental and community issue. The lack of plastic waste recycling and the influx of plastics in our landfills in the NWT.

Plastic is present in everything in our society, but the management of plastic waste remains a problem. Only 9 percent of the plastic waste that is created in our country is recycled. Plastics continue to be buried in landfills across the territory, including in Yellowknife, as reported this past April by the CBC. 60 tonnes of plastic waste was collected in the blue bins across the city, and they are now in the landfill as of 2023.

Mr. Speaker, the ideal situation would be for us to leave the land and water clean, free from plastic wastes and all contaminants as long as this land shall last. Plastic takes centuries to decompose, and plastic recycling infrastructure across the country is limited. As of 2018, countries like China, that used to take and process North American waste, refused to take any more plastic and so it piles higher here at home. But, Mr. Speaker, we do have levers to pull at our disposal in this Assembly. Extended producer responsibility is now a tool available to us as legislators in the the NWT under the New Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act.

New regulations, legislation, and policies can help jurisdictions, including ours, to shift responsibility from governments to recycle plastics back to the manufacturers who create plastic waste in the first place. I would like to see clear direction from this Cabinet on how we can help lead the change in this country to push back the endless waves of plastic packaging from growing in our community landfills. I am keen to see what action this government will take on plastic waste, and how we will help support the Government of Canada's zero plastic waste agenda. I will have questions for the Minister of ECC at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Members' statements. Member from Sahtu.

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 261-20(1): BARGE CANCELLATION IMPACTS TO BUSINESSES

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the impacts on the residents for the

cancellation of the 2024 barging season. As I spoke in the House previously, the business and residents of the Sahtu region are facing insurmountable challenges right now to get supplies delivered to the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is construction season. It's the time of year when roads, bridges, sheds, buildings, and other construction projects are advancing. It's a very short window but it's a critical season; businesses have projects, people are working, and money circulates throughout the community. When businesses do well, the residents benefit but, Mr. Speaker, when businesses suffer, residents suffer.

Mr. Speaker, right now, businesses in the Sahtu region are in a crisis situation. We are already seeing employees being laid off. We are on the slippery slope. Businesses are scrambling to bring in supplies at outrageous prices. They are struggling to stay open. Projects are being delayed or cancelled all together. Without swift intervention to support the business sector at this point in time, the local economy faces risk of collapse all together. On May the 23rd, 2024, without any preparation, the business community of the Sahtu was left on their own to arrange transportation of food, goods, and supplies needed for the construction season.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of the Sahtu region will inevitably bear the burden of air shipping costs. In fact, the residents in the Sahtu are already feeling this situation. Groceries are expected to increase five times in the coming weeks. In one case of diesel exhaust fuel, which normally sells for \$75 a case, is now increased to \$400 a case. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mahsi, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. The business community is in dire need of support. I look to the Minister of ITI to find ways to support Sahtu businesses to keep the region from economic recession and to protect the residents from absorbing the financial shock. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Deh Cho.

MEMBERS' STATEMENT 262-20(1):  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN  
COMMUNITIES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I represent four small communities, and some of my communities are entirely Indigenous. The size of my communities range from 45 to 736 or 50 people.

Mr. Speaker, we are small communities but so unique and so rich in culture and tradition.

Mr. Speaker, the communities in the Deh Cho region do not have a major economic driver. There are trees everywhere, and the forest industry is a natural sector to develop but the forest industry has not yet become a regional economic driver for my communities.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the road system. We have abundant natural resources. We can ship goods in and out of community then. We can bring tourists in. We can develop a local economy. But, Mr. Speaker, we need entrepreneurs. We need people to have a vision and take a risk.

We have a successful example of Dene Fur Clouds in Fort Providence. Through Prosper NWT, we have a locally owned and operated high quality fur garment retail store. These furs are sewn by local seamstresses and shipped all over the world.

Enterprise was the home to designer Darcy Moses. Mr. Moses is an outstanding artist that has combined traditional Dene art from high-end fashion. He is a leader in the art sector. He has sold to high-end brands and retailers internationally. However, due to wildfires last year, he lost his home and has now relocated to Wrigley and is working at restarting up his business.

Another business we have in our community is Cameron Sapp as CMMS Mechanical Services that started up, and Cameron is really getting going so I have to wish Cameron all the success as he navigates through stuff that businesses -- small businesses go through.

Our communities are uniquely and authentically Indigenous. This is a major asset in tourism. Our communities just as they are can provide tourism experiences that people across the world are looking for. We are remote northern Indigenous communities. Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you. And thank you to my colleagues. Our communities just as they are can provide tourism experience that people across the world are looking for. We are remote northern Indigenous communities, and tourists want this authentic experience.

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho may be a riding with small communities but we have large potential for economic growth. I will have questions for the Minister of ITI later today. Thank you.



**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 263-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASING

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, frustration continues to grow among my constituents who are stuck in the process of finalizing their recreational land leases years after the department indicated their applications were moving ahead. I've been working with several constituents over the last six months -- the Minister knows who they are -- to figure out how to move forward and along the way to progress. And what I have seen so far has been incredibly disappointing.

When I last spoke on the floor, the Minister responsible, he assured me that this process was consistent and transparent, and he would work to improve communications with applicants. Since that time, my advocacy on this issue to ensure those commitments were followed through have only taken me in circles. The department has placed the final decision on the First Nation, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation in this case, but the First Nation officials there have directed me back to the department. This should come as no surprise. The department created this land lease process and began accepting applications, not the First Nation. They cannot shrug off the responsibility and claim that criticizing their application process means questioning Indigenous sovereignty. I know of Indigenous families who applied for these leases as well, and they have been told by the department that they don't trust them to respect the environment and wildlife on the sites they were looking to build cabins on.

Now, these are -- I'm seeing I'm going too fast, so I'll slow down. I'm passionate, Mr. Speaker. I'm very passionate.

Mr. Speaker, the department didn't flat out tell them that but that's how they feel. They feel that their concerns are not being heard. They feel like they're being made to run in circles, and I see no reason to disagree with them. The land lease application process is clearly not consistent and transparent when they are picking and choosing which applicants can build cabins and which applicants can't, and not giving them proper communication to those decisions for years at a time.

The department can't put the responsibility on Indigenous governments when it's their process and they are the ones denying, in some cases Indigenous rights, to people to build cabins on public land. If the department can't improve land leases consistently, they need to stop this

process or else more applicants will be stuck in an indefinite loop without any progress. We've made exceptions before based on promises made by ADMs to people who own a lot of property in certain areas of unsettled claims, why can't we make the same adjustments for law-abiding citizens following the process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from the Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 264-20(1):  
ELDERS' HOMES

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my constituency meeting in Tsiigehtchic, Peter Ross, an elder from the community, stated that he seems to be forgotten by the government after elections are completed. He stated that once he votes for his MLA, he does not see them for another four years. I do not want to be that elected official. I want to be visible and work for the constituency of my riding. But I require the assistance of this government because you too have been elected as Ministers to sit on Cabinet by your peers.

Mr. Speaker, Peter Ross is a well-known elder throughout the region and the NWT and is very knowledgeable about the government process. Peter's primary concern is about the condition of his house now and for the foreseeable future. Mr. Ross is a homeowner, and his house is over 30 years old and needs some upgrades and repairs. But being on a fixed income restricts one from living a comfortable life let alone trying to finance his own upgrades and repairs.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ross is speaking for all the elderly homeowners in Tsiigehtchic and the rest of the NWT. And I know there are elders within my riding who have similar concerns, but they do not know where to go for assistance. Why should our elderly population have to look for assistance? There should be a program in place where the government actually approaches them and offers this assistance. Imagine, if Peter Ross hears a knock on his door and when he answers the door, a government representative is standing there and offering to inspect his house for deficiencies. But in reality, this is very unlikely to happen.

Mr. Speaker, my friend Peter Ross calls me on occasion, sometimes to provide me with his concerns or just talk, and there are times he just calls to check in on my well-being, and I am very appreciative of this.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the local housing authorities conduct annual inspections on their public housing units throughout the NWT so that they can save money on any repairs that are needed before they become major ones. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. If the government can provide housing inspections for the elderly homeowners to find deficiencies and notify the elders that there is, indeed, something that requires their attention right away, they will save a lot of financial burdens in the future for the elders. Looking out for the benefit of our elders now will enable them to live a comfortable life knowing that someone really does care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 265-20(1):  
WASTE REDUCTION

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, garbage is a problem. My colleagues here in the House have spoken about the need to remove large amounts of hazardous waste from community landfills. This is important. And we also need to figure out ways to stop that waste from getting into those landfills in the first place.

One positive local initiative by Kavanaugh Brothers, which is part of the Det'on Cho group of companies, is to look at opportunities to prevent old tires from going into our landfills and also avoid the cost and GHG emissions from having to ship all our old tires back down south for processing. Instead, Kavanaugh is looking at creative ways we can use shredded tire material, and as of September 2022, over 200,000 tires have been shredded in Hay River and Yellowknife.

So that's an example of a circular economy, which means that we try to use and repair and reuse materials as much as we can instead of just throwing everything into a landfill and buying new things all the time. It's good for the environment. It's good for our pocketbooks. And it's good for our economy because we can turn old things into new products that are useful and could even be sold.

Other ways to keep big or hazardous materials out of landfills is recycling. Currently, 11 communities in the NWT, from Kakisa to Norman Wells, have been able to recycle

electronics and electrical products such as lawnmowers, vacuums, power tools, even solar panels once they've reached the end of their useful life.

During the last Assembly, the Waste Reduction Act was passed which gives us the power to introduce extended producer responsibility. So that means we could require the companies that make those products in the first place to take them back once we're done with them. That could take a lot of burden off of our communities, who are spending many millions of dollars on creating and managing landfills. If companies have to pay for and deal with the waste that they create in the first place, it could push them to make products differently, to make them last longer, with materials that are less hazardous, and make them easier to reuse and recycle. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ECC. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 266-20(1):  
LONG SHADOW MUSIC FESTIVAL

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2018, Yellowknife composer Carmen Braden had an idea for a music event in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, that celebrates music on the edges. The Longshadow Music Festival celebrates music that is wild, weird, and wonderful. Each event explores music made in the contemporary world yet with a connection to the music that has shaped our world in the past. Northern and Canadian music are the features of the festival.

Alongside special guests and featured concerts, the festival explores ideas about improvisation, composition, performance, and collaboration. Multi-genre at its core, there has been a mix of old, classical, contemporary classical, jazz, songwriter, improvised, electronic, sound scape, fiddle, and Indigenous music at the Longshadow festival.

The Longshadow Music Festival returns for the fourth time in 2024. This year's festival celebrates songs, songwriters, and string quartets. Feature performers include Cassandra Blondin-Bourke, Rob Elo, LJJ, Ryan McCord, the Garenau String Quartet, Kay Sibbeston, Kathryn Oraas, and Andrew Ball.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Longshadow festival kicked off last night at the Sundog Trading Post and continues this evening in this very building with a performance in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly. The Garneau String Quartet will be playing in the Great Hall at 7:30

p.m. And thanks to contributions from a number of MLAs, including myself, I am happy to note that the concert is free for anyone to attend.

The Gameau Quartet is the ensemble in residence at the MacEwan University Conservatory of Music in Edmonton. The quartet is comprised of members of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, so I expect this will be a world-class performance. I would also note that for classical diehards, there will be an open rehearsal in the Great Hall from 5:15 to 5:45. Bring your kids.

A third concert featuring a exciting group of performers will occur this Saturday night at the Top Knight, and there will be a workshop hosted by the Canadian New Music Network at Carmen Braden's studio on Sunday, June 9th. Details are available on the Longshadow website.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to Carmen Braden for her vision in bringing this exciting festival to fruition in our community. I encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the performances this weekend. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 267-20(1):  
CULTURE SITES AT TALTSON

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, last year I brought forward the issue of issue of cultural sites and unmarked graves in the path of the Taltson Hydro Project. I spoke about how the community of Roche River was abandoned to provide a clear path for this hydro project, but it was never made clear how the territorial government would go about identifying cultural sites and burial sacred grounds that could be disturbed by this project.

Mr. Speaker, the burial sites in this location is 60 feet under water. There are cultural sites like all over the North, dating back into time immemorial, and we need to ensure that they are treated with respect. So analyzing what impacts infrastructure projects have on the environment and culture in any region of the North is extremely important if you want to move on from the history of colonialism and systemic racism.

When I spoke on this last year, I was given a clear commitment from the territorial government that they would respect the Indigenous communities around Taltson Hydro Project but since then, I have not heard no updates, neither have the Akaitcho or Metis governments, as this project moves ahead. My

constituents and the Indigenous natives of the riding are once again seeking clarity before it's too late. We need to progress on this issue so history and culture and land is respected.

The territorial government needs to show Canada that here in the North we do development differently, in partnership with Indigenous governments and with the upmost respect for the history of the land and its people. I look forward to asking the Minister for clarity on this project today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 268-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE  
SETTLEMENT

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about an issue that has been years in the making, and it's still happening now. So Mr. Speaker, the issue I am referring to is the final settlement agreement related to compensation for those harmed by discriminatory underfunding of First Nations child and family services.

On January 4th, 2022, the government announced that an agreement-in-principle in the sum of \$20 billion in compensation for First Nations children would be provided to children who were removed from their homes between April 1st, 1991, and March 31st, 2022, as well as for their parents and caregivers. The agreement also includes compensation for those impacted by the federal government's narrow definition of Jordan's Principle, as well as for children who did not receive or were delayed receiving an essential public service or product.

Mr. Speaker, the parties to this case, which includes the Assembly of First Nations and other plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit, reached a final settlement agreement on compensation in April 2023. However, the issue at hand here, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the NWT and Nunavut were excluded from this compensation agreement. The federal government says the reason for this is because funding for child and family services in the NWT and Nunavut is provided by the federal Department of Finance through transfer payments with both territorial governments, which make up part of our annual budget, therefore both NWT and Nunavut governments decide how and where to spend those funds within the general revenue. But Yukon was eligible, so this makes no sense as we have the same status.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem with this situation lies with the fact that the NWT was excluded from this agreement entirely. In my view, it does not, whether it is the GNWT or the federal government who used public funds to carry out the child welfare system over the last 30 plus years. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that Indigenous children within the NWT also endured pain, trauma, and hardship within the child welfare system alongside other children in other provinces and territories in this country. The parents, the grandparents, also endured this pain as well. So there is no good reason why the NWT is excluded from that final settlement. I will have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 269-20(1):  
IMPACTS OF DAY SHELTER

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, and I want to make it absolutely clear, there is shelter support downtown whereas in people don't mind having the day shelter on its way. Mr. Speaker, it's a project the community does acknowledge and certainly embraces in its own way. Mr. Speaker, however, the issue has come down to, and continues to be, the size of the shelter. Are we building a premium shelter, the shelter to solve all problems? It's not just big, it's bloated. It's going to solve every problem in the North. That's the fear of the community, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to make it absolutely clear, because I don't want the Minister and the government and even those who are half listening out there and only hearing what they want to hear, no, there is no issue with the principles of having a shelter. It's the size, the monolithic structure we're going to build downtown assuming we're going to solve everything with the one shelter, Mr. Speaker.

So the community is concerned, Mr. Speaker, because with we've seen what's happened with the last downtown shelter just around the corner. The moment it was established, it had impacts on neighbours. It had caused further problems, and businesses felt the decline. People felt uncomfortable walking near it. It wasn't supported in the right way.

Mr. Speaker, I worry this is a case of déjà vu all again. Now we're going to go even two or three

times bigger. And speaking of two or three times bigger, the last budget was \$800,000 and now it's over \$3 million. I mean, that's run by government shelters -- or government employees. So the question is, is how big is this shelter going to be?

Part of the issue I'm trying to raise here, Mr. Speaker, is not just the impacts on the community of Yellowknife Centre or Yellowknife at all, it's the fact that we're facing and confronting a couple of issues. The first one is regions have asked support for their shelters, and we're not giving them that chance. If there wasn't a better opportunity to support reconciliation by getting people into their communities back to the communities where they'll be more healthy, and support those communities and regions with funding to help address their particular issues, I don't know what better an excuse or opportunity there would be, Mr. Speaker. And currently, if we send them back -- not that we can just send people back -- but there's nowhere for them to go, so it's a multiprong problem, Mr. Speaker. But to build one shelter to solve them all will never solve our problems, Mr. Speaker. Ultimately, at the end of the day, I need to emphasize the merits and the need, and the principles of the shelter is not the issue. Ultimately, it comes down to the size and the weight dumping it down in the middle of downtown and ignoring the fact of the upcoming impacts it will have on this community, including the lack of supports for our regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 270-20(1):  
VILLAGE OF FORT SIMPSON – CANADIAN  
BIOMASS COMMUNITY PROJECT OF THE  
YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, I would like to take this time to talk about the Canadian Biomass and their awards.

On April 19th, 2024 they announce this year's winners. Their awards program celebrates outstanding individuals, companies, and communities working passionately to advance the country's bioeconomy. Inaugural winners will be celebrated in the spring 2024 issue of Canadian Biomass. Awards will be given out in the following categories:

- Champion of the Year, individual award
- Company of the Year, company award

- Thought Leader of the Year, individual award
- Community Project of the Year, community award
- Lifetime Achievement, individual award.

I would like to focus on the Community Project of the Year winner today. The award is given to an outstanding community biomass project in Canada, brought online within the last three years. The award recognizes the community and its stakeholders who worked to bring a project to fruition. It is open to bioheat, biofuels, and bioproducts projects from municipal and Indigenous communities as well as community groups and associations.

This year's winner was the village of Fort Simpson. They made a commitment to heat all municipal buildings with wood pellet heating and this year they underwent two biomass projects:

- A new wood pellet boiler in the water treatment plant; and
- Connecting the community pool and gym to an existing biomass-fueled district heating system.

In speaking with the mayor, he talked about the two biomass projects done last year and will be looking at doing more municipal buildings in the future. They are working closely with the Arctic Energy Alliance regional office in Fort Simpson who helped the village with professional advice and financial assistance.

The village dug a steam line from our community hall to the swimming pool fitness centre and have been tied into the main steam plant which normally runs on wood pellets. As well, they are just finishing off putting a wood pellet system into the water treatment plant with a big hopper for wood pellet supply. Both projects came up to be around \$250,000 and they will be a major cost saving moving forward. The village is very proud and excited to be using renewable energy in place of carbon fuel and reducing CO2 emissions.

I would like to congratulate the village on winning the award and for helping to reduce the CO2 emissions. Thank you.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Member from the Sahtu.

## Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-20(1):  
1995 FORT NORMAN WILDFIRES

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 6th, the community of Tulita celebrates heroic efforts lead by Mr. Rocky Norwegian, and other community members, in the evacuation of the whole community and building a firebreak during the 1995 wildfires that saw an aggressive movement within one kilometer of the community. Because of their fast action, it saved the community. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

## Oral Questions

QUESTION 260-20(1):  
CANNABIS PRODUCERS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been hearing from our local cannabis grower and producer that they are having difficulty kind of gaining a foothold in the industry knowing that they're operating in the North. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister describe -- the Minister of Finance specifically, describe the policy used for supporting our local producers? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a policy in place from the financial management board that supports having our local producers receive a discount on the markup. So the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission places a markup on all cannabis products that come for sale in the North. For our cannabis producers here locally, any cannabis producers here locally, they get a 10 percentage point discount, which equates in real numbers to being almost a 30 percent discount on that markup. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit to reviewing this policy and considering changes to ensure that our fledgling industry is given its best chance to grow and create more private sector employment in our community? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to tour the facility here and meet with the producers, and I've heard from them

that they certainly would, sounds like, prefer to see a discount on the retail end price as opposed to on the markup price. Mr. Speaker, we've certainly had that conversation many times. No doubt it would -- I can't say whether it would make a difference for them. You know, at this point I'd need to know what their numbers are. I can commit to reviewing the policy again. We've done that in the past. We've done that in response to this industry, prepared to review it again. As I've said, I can't commit to what it would look like. It's a financial management board approved policy, but I'm happy to commit that we will review it one more time. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to, yet again, meeting with our local producer to discuss these potential changes so we can ensure their perspective is heard as the department is reviewing it, the policy. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly happy to do that. As I've said, I understand they've looked at having a retail end point. Our perspective has been to put at the markup, which is really the end that we control. So to ensure that we all move forward on a policy that makes sense to everyone, if we're going to do this review, I'd be happy to meet with them and make sure that we're all speaking the same language. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that further commitment. Mr. Speaker, finally, can the Minister give a timeline for when we can expect all of this to occur? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Subject, obviously, to finding an opportunity to meet with these producers, what I could say is we can have a review in front of the financial management board this summer. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 261-20(1):  
WASTE DIVERSION

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of ECC explain how the GNWT is diverting as much plastic from NWT landfills as possible under the current regime? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Minister of ECC.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The GNWT currently has three waste diversion programs. The single use retail bag program, which was the first of its kind at the provincial/territorial level in Canada. Since the program's inception in 2010, it's estimated that we've prevented more than 84 million bags, or 422.1 tonnes, from being used and discarded. We also have the beverage container program, which on average diverts 141 tonnes of plastic waste each year. And plastic components of electronics and electrical items are returned through our electronic recycling program, and the e-pilot are also recycled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And recognizing that this is a little bit of an overlap to MACA's jurisdiction, I hope the Minister can answer this. What is the GNWT doing to support municipalities on waste reduction and diversion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to creating three to five new expanded regulated programs by 2030 as part of the waste reduction management strategy and implementation plan. To date, ECC has identified used oil, tires, and expanded suite of electronics and electrical items. These materials were chosen primarily because they're already segregated in landfills and have been identified for their environmental risk. Work to create regulations to enable the recycling of these materials to update existing regulations is underway and will be undertaken in the next several years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess more specifically to my statement earlier today, what is the GNWT doing to fully support Canada's zero waste plastic agenda? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the national level, the GNWT endorses the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment's strategy on zero plastic waste, which aims to reduce the harmful environmental impacts of plastic waste. Canada has also played a key role in moving toward the development and adaptation of a United Nations plastics treaty, which this work is expected to wrap up at an international level in 2025. Once the UN plastics treaty is ratified, we anticipate that any outcomes and commitments will be incorporated into the future work of the Canadian Council of

Ministers of the Environment of which the GNWT is an active member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, recognizing that this is a much bigger problem than just our jurisdiction, I appreciate that answer.

Finally, will the GNWT be able to enact extended producer responsibility regulations or policies in the life of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last Legislative Assembly, the GNWT amended the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act to enable extended producer responsibility. Before the new Act can come into force, ECC will need to amend the existing beverage container regulations and the electronics recycling regulations so that these will be a priority over the next few years. The work is expected to be completed by 2026.

The GNWT is committed to creating programs for used oil, tires, and the expanded suite of electronics and electrical items. ECC will consider EPR approaches for all three programs that will engage with communities, residents, and stakeholders for their input on the proposed programs and regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 262-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASING

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I've raised the issue of recreational land leasing in this House before. It seems like we don't have a clear path forward. What has the Minister been able to accomplish on his end since I've raised this leasing issue in the North Slave? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of ECC.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Since I last spoke of this item in the House, Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure of meeting with several Indigenous governments to discuss the topic. Primarily, in early March, I met with the Chief Sanguéz and Chief Betsina and my staff and their staff at the YKDFN to discuss this exact topic. And at the end of that

meeting, both sides have committed to ensure that our officials are going to work together and discuss the issues as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Well, that's good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good, it's good to work with the First Nations. It's essential to work with the First Nations. But the Akaicho process has obviously never been settled, so why have we been issuing these leases in the past? There are cabins out there. There are homes out there. Why have we made these decisions in the past, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stand here today, I think I'm more than comfortable speaking to decisions that I've made but I'd rather not try and stand here and explain the decisions of my predecessors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I can respect that because I could have a lot to say about decisions of his predecessors, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister have an answer for my constituents any time -- will my constituents have an answer, yes or no, any time soon? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Member for the question. This is truly not a yes or no question. There are a lot of factors at play and certainly one of the most important ones -- and this was something that I brought up with the discussions with all of the Indigenous leaders that I've met with to date and, you know, it's the respect for the consultation process and to ensure that this is a collaborative effort going forward and that both parties have the ability to ensure that their perspective and point of view is recognized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister issue a moratorium on all future land leasing until he can get this problem solved? Because it's unfair to raise expectations in the hopes of my constituents and any other Northerner looking for a recreational land lease. Let's just call it quits. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, this is not a one-party decision. This is a collaborative process involving Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, and I will not stand in the House today and make a unilateral decision on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 263-20(1):  
DAY SHELTER IMPACTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services with respect to the monolith challenge and the impact challenge the day shelter is going to have on the community of Yellowknife Centre and Yellowknife at large.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask in the context of when a road is built, we have impact funds and other types of things similar. And that is particularly the issue. So my question for the Minister specifically is now what impact fund is being designed to support the impacts of the community of Yellowknife Centre once this giant shelter, to solve all the problems of the world, is built? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many shelters that are in Yellowknife and have been for many years. You know, there are many of our Northwest Territories residents, a large population of Indigenous people that struggle from historic traumas, and they are not a road. And so what we are doing here in Yellowknife is -- you know, the federal government gave a large sum of money to the Northwest Territories to specifically, in Yellowknife, to build, to replace, to provide a space that -- you know, that was worked with the Indigenous advisory board. There was consultation as what it should look like, where, what it should do. It is to provide shelters to those people that are living in the Northwest Territories, in the capital, that are struggling with homelessness and addictions right now. So right now, there is no impact to the community. There are already homeless shelters here, and we are not providing impact monies to the city of Yellowknife for that. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, I want to reaffirm that the merits and principles are not the issue of the shelter, so I want to make sure we never go on a tangent in the wrong direction on that.

Mr. Speaker, the last shelter that was downtown had impacts. Security cameras to be put on buildings. Homes were threatened. People were doing people things in yards -- I'll leave it at that, I won't use that language. But

that said, Mr. Speaker, it impacted neighbourhoods and changed neighbourhoods specifically. What is the Minister doing to meet the needs of the community that this giant shelter will cause once they establish it and have it up and running? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like again like I said, I don't understand whether it's where it is now, it's downtown Yellowknife, where it was before, it's downtown Yellowknife, where it's going back, it's downtown Yellowknife. There's nothing changing, it's downtown Yellowknife. I don't know where the Member wants me to put our Indigenous homeless people, predominantly, that are here that are struggling. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, we're getting awful close to a point of order wherein she keeps saying Indigenous people, and I feel it's drawing the attention of I'm trying to separate our field some motivation. There is none. So, Mr. Speaker, as I qualify that point, it's not about a racialized issue in any way. It's about impacts on the community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking what type of discussion is the department of health having with the neighbourhoods about these pending impacts that are coming to the neighbourhood? As I've given examples, I won't repeat them, will the Minister agree to meet with the neighbourhood and call a neighbourhood meeting to discuss these things? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was already consultation done within Yellowknife. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a petition that I'll, in the near future, table before the House, not today, but it has over a thousand signatures. The point being is there's a lot of people concerned about the impacts. Would the Minister go to the community again, call a community meeting, and discuss about how to address the impacts? Again, not about removing the shelter, the impacts the shelter will have on the community. Will she do that for the community who needs that conversation again and again until we get it right? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was extensive engagement done. The wellness and recovery centre isn't expected to be opened until 2027. At that time, you know, the operations and all of



those things that are going to come into play with that and following the opening, you know, that's where we can discuss ongoing, you know, issues that may come arise. But, you know, as of right now, we don't know what those issues will come, you know, how this facility will support those residents that are here in Yellowknife going to be utilizing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 264-20(1):  
ELDERS' HOME INSPECTIONS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The elderly homeowners do not have an advocate that they are aware of. Due to this problem, their homes are neglected until it becomes a major problem and too costly to repair. My question to the Minister responsible for Housing NWT is can the Minister provide an annual housing inspection for the elders so that they can take action before it becomes a financial burden on the elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT has many programs in place to help homeowners with any type of repairs they require in their homes provided they fit the core need income threshold and the policy around these repair and maintenance programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The local housing authority conducts annual inspections on public housing units to cut down on major costs. Can the Minister and/or the department direct local housing authorities to have their maintenance staff conduct annual inspections on these few elders' homes within their respective communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing NWT can book a trip into Tsiigehtchic, and other communities in the near future, to meet with homeowners interested in applying for the program or requiring program assistance. We will advertise well ahead of time and also communicate with the MLA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister consider contracting an Indigenous government or company to conduct these

inspections? This is just to bring comfort to the elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recently signed the collaborative agreement with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, with Housing NWT. So this might be an opportunity to work with them and work with the elders in the communities for homeownership repair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. I am aware of the agreement. Can the Minister provide programs that these elders are eligible for and provide those directly to the homeowners by mail? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of programs with Housing NWT to encourage elders to age in place, including our preventative maintenance program, our repairs program, our mobility program, our seniors' program specific to seniors, and we also have an emergency repairs program. We can provide this information to the MLA and all the MLAs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from the Deh Cho.

QUESTION 265-20(1):  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN  
COMMUNITIES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI. Dene Fur Clouds is a successful example of a locally owned and operated business. How is this department working with Prosper NWT to expand subsidiaries into other communities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Minister for ITI.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would definitely like the opportunity to see a lot more entrepreneurship across the territory, especially ensuring that we're supporting the development of entrepreneurship in our small communities.

With the subsidiaries that currently fall under Prosper NWT, they employ roughly eight full-time positions annually, and they cost Prosper NWT about \$1.3 million a year. And so one of the goals that I have throughout the term

of this Assembly is to work with the very skilled board members of Prosper NWT, who bring a lot of entrepreneurial experience with them, in order to ensure that we're making or creating an opportunity for these subsidiaries to become as independent and sustainable as possible. Thank you.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. What tourism development or economic development initiatives have taken place in my region, the Deh Cho region? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within the Deh Cho region, ITI spends about \$1.3 million, and that's divided up between community futures to the tune of about just over \$200,000, through the community transfer initiative to the tune of about \$150,000, SEED contributions at roughly \$734,000, economic diversification using the northern food development program at almost \$57,000, the Canadian agriculture program as well as other various contributions account for almost \$165,000 as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you to the Minister for that response. How does the department work with successful artists and entrepreneurs to encourage more of the development of more entrepreneurs?

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ITI works closely with entrepreneurs and has roughly \$1.4 million that it can feed right into entrepreneurial investments through its SEED program. In addition to that, I'd also like to mention that roughly the same amount is invested in the arts over at the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

But in addition to investing in entrepreneurs through programs like that, specific to artists the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment also has some very unique programs to try to help grow artists across the territory and also expand their reach beyond their community and beyond the borders of the Northwest Territories. So, for example, Take the Artist to Market is a program where artists are actually going as far as down to Santa Fe later this year in order to be able to sell product. And also Prosper NWT has grants of up to \$15,000 in order to create a digital presence for artists of the Northwest Territories. In addition to that, we're also bringing arts together under one roof within ITI to make sure that we are supporting artists with a one-stop shop. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Final supplementary. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the department track the number of business startups? Can the Minister commit to providing a list of businesses in the Deh Cho riding and the number of businesses that have started in the last three years? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some businesses start up and quietly happen from people's living rooms. And so I would love to know exactly who wants to become an entrepreneur and ensure that they have the support that they need. But I can certainly commit to providing the Member with any information we have, especially when they relate to BIP'd companies and entrepreneurs. But any information that I am able to provide the Member from both ITI and Prosper NWT, I will certainly be happy to do so. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 266-20(1):  
BURIAL SITES IN TALTSON RIVER AREA

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 19th Assembly I brought forward a concern that was brought to my attention about the burial sites located in the Taltson River area and where the hydro dam is, and the elders have told me that the burial sites in that location are buried almost 60 feet underwater. And so, Mr. Speaker, I brought this issue up to the 19th Assembly Minister of Infrastructure Diane Archie, the Minister of the day, and I just wanted to find out if the Minister of Infrastructure here today could give me an update on this. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister for Infrastructure.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some good news to report in a broad sense. The project for the Taltson watershed area and the potential expansion of the Taltson is proceeding under an MOU. And it's an MOU that involves the Akaitcho First Nations as well as Metis governments of the region and of the Taltson watershed. And we've had more than one steering committee already in the time of this government. One, in fact, in person, where the group travelled to see what underwater tables would look like along with members of the steering committee as well as members of their council. I say all of that because I want to emphasize the fact that this is not a GNWT project. It's not GNWT led. We really are one

party at that table. And under that MOU, there is funding for Indigenous governments to conduct their own investigations to understand the traditional knowledge of the region, both from a permitting perspective but also to understand the legacy. I've said very clearly to our partners, and I'll say it again, this project will not advance if legacy issues are not resolved.

So as far as the specifics of what individual groups might be doing, I believe there's -- and I know that there has been work conducted by individual members of the steering committee, individual First Nations and Indigenous governments of the region. I can't speak, as I say, to what their work is. I know there's contribution funding, and I know they're working on it. So I'll certainly commit to the Member to try and get that information put together so that both of us have an up-to-date list of what's happening. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for her response. I am happy that this government is working through the MOU with the Indigenous governments on this issue. And it's a very important issue that I keep hearing from my constituents, and this issue need to be addressed. So I think in terms of funding, from what I could understand, there was a funding commitment by the previous Minister of about \$1.8 million, additional \$1.2 million annually. I just want to know if this commitment is still part of that MOU? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the existing or the specific amounts under the MOU in front of me. I'll have to just double check. There's been no reductions to the Taltson work, and there is federal funding involved. And, as I understand it, the federal funding that we have does take us forward to a point that is satisfactory to get this work done. So I've not been under any impression of any cuts or funding drawbacks. I expect that if there was an understanding from the federal government -- or from the Indigenous governments, then it should indeed be there and be satisfactory. It's not been raised from the members to me that it's unsatisfactory. So a long way of saying I think the money is still there. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And she answered my third and fourth question. But, no, I am happy that there's a commitment here to continue to look at this project and -- because the burial sites in this area, you know, we need to come up with a plan as to how we're going to get it out of the water and move it to locations. So Mr. Speaker, I'm just happy that the Minister responded, and I

don't have any further questions because she already answered my questions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 267-20(1):  
BARGE CANCELLATIONS IMPACTS TO  
BUSINESSES

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, following up on my Member's statement, is directed to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The Sahtu businesses have not only incurred additional expenses, extra transportation costs, loss of revenues, now let's explore the designing of a relief program.

My first question, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister initiate business funding grants that support Sahtu businesses to withstand all of these business pressures and disruptions for 2024-2025 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister of ITI.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by acknowledging the difficult, difficult time that the low water levels are causing for many, many residents and businesses across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we know that government supports won't replace work across the territory and in our communities, work that is vitally, vitally important. And we also know that these supports won't be all things to absolutely everyone in communities, but I want to assure the Member that we are heeding the urgency of this. I appreciate the Member making a Member's statement today on this, and that we are working on an all-of-government approach to respond to this situation. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that response. I'm glad to hear an all-of-government approach. We would need all hands-on deck here for this situation.

Can the Minister provide interest free loans to the Sahtu businesses to support cash flow to cover inventory and operating expenses for the Sahtu region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to interest free loans through Prosper NWT, they do not have currently the authority to offer these

to businesses. However, this is definitely something that, through this all-of-government approach to looking how we can respond to this situation, we are considering all tools that are available to us in our toolbox. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Mahsi cho to the reply of that. It's very encouraging to see that we are here to support our business community.

Mr. Speaker, my third question to the Minister, can the Minister immediately freeze loan payments owed to Prosper NWT from businesses in the Sahtu region without penalty for a period of time to weather this financial storm? Mahsi.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Prosper NWT, I can confirm for the Member, is currently working with ITI and reaching out to affected clients to discuss immediate needs, such as interest only payments or other accommodations to help clients as necessary. I can also confirm for the Member that Prosper NWT has already approved interest only payments for a client in the Sahtu with multiple loans resulting in significant monthly cash flow savings. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Final supplementary. Member from Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Final two, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister work with the Education, Culture and Employment department to provide supports to Sahtu businesses to maintain their employees during this challenging time? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that I have reached out to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and although departments don't currently have a specific program like this at this time, ITI is working with ECE along with other departments to determine what supports are available, how they can use the tools in their toolbox to ensure that we are responding to the needs of businesses in the Sahtu region. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 268-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE  
SETTLEMENT

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know of someone in our communities who was in the child welfare system. Some parents and grandparents passed on without seeing the children. This is sad as many families long to

see the children, maybe just to say I love you, hug them, or ask for forgiveness.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister in reference to my Member's statement, can the Premier explain in as much detail as possible why the NWT was excluded from the final settlement agreement related to the compensation for those harmed by discriminatory underfunding of First Nation Child and Family Services? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this settlement stemmed from a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal by the Assembly of First Nations and an additional society, I can't recall the name right now. This process, that was in 2007, and it was finally in 2023 that the agreement was settled after the human rights tribunal ordered Canada to pay a certain amount, which they appealed. It was then confirmed.

From my understanding, because we are not a party to this lawsuit, it wasn't our -- we had no option to opt into this. But the program, the First Nations Child and Family Services Program, applied in all provinces and the Yukon except Ontario. In Ontario, there was a cost sharing agreement with the province for the provision of child and family services on First Nations reserves, and there was also a federal agreement with Alberta and BC to provide child and family services to certain First Nation reserves. And a similar agreement was in place in the Yukon as well. And so for whatever reason, it's those provinces and territories who fit that criteria that the claim was made on behalf of.

So I've dealt with this as a constituent issue myself because the thought that this is not fair to people in the Northwest Territories who have been through the system is one that is shared by many in the territory. And I think I agree with the Member that we should have been involved in this. We should have been part of this, as Nunavut as well. But the fact is that the tribunal -- the complaint to the tribunal did not include us. So it was a decision of those making the complaint to not include the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for the answer. And it will be nice to know who was the Premier in 2007, and maybe Mr. Hawkins was part of -- was a Regular MLA as well. So somebody didn't do their job here.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain whether there is anything within his powers as

Premier that may be available to him to intervene in this final settlement agreement to include affected NWT residents within the recipients of the case? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated, this was a decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which I have no influence over. It ended up with an agreement, agreed to by the Government of Canada, and so I have no ability to open up that agreement, which was the result of, you know, 16 years essentially of litigation. So, no, unfortunately the answer is no, as far as I know. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, if there's a will, there's a way, okay. So I know that they could do it. And Nunavut has a good president too, Nathan Denette -- sorry, I forgot his name but, you know, they can do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge that there were individuals within the NWT child welfare system between 1991 and 2022 who endured the pain, trauma, and hardship from the GNWT's child welfare system similar to what people endured under the federal system pertaining to this case.

So that's just more of a comment. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to -- yes, I'm getting to it.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to reexamine this case and reconsider whether NWT residents in the child welfare system under the same timeframe deserve some level of compensations as individuals in other jurisdictions received under this settlement agreement. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Member had a couple of questions in there. The earlier one, were there individuals in the system in the Northwest Territories who suffered hardship? Of course there were. I know them personally; I'm sure every Member of this House probably has stories about someone they know who was in the system. That being said, this is a settled agreement that I have no ability to influence. We would likely need changes to -- or potentially need changes to federal legislation, we would need the human rights tribunal to be on board, the Government of Canada I'm assuming. So where there's a will, there's a way, but there needs to be a will beyond just the will of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. There needs to be a will among all of the parties involved and it's much, much larger than just the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 269-20(1):  
WASTE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
STRATEGY

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECC. So the waste resource management strategy and implementation plan which was released in 2019 identifies three types of waste to focus on. As the Minister mentioned earlier, used oil, tires, and electronics. So why were these three types of waste chosen as the ones to focus on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of ECC.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. These three items were primarily chosen because they're already segregated in landfills across the NWT. Many of the electronics and electrical devices that are sold worldwide currently contain large amounts of plastic. Modern day tires contain synthetic rubber at a rate of about 24 percent, which is a plastic polymer. So that is why that was added to the list. And used oil is certainly an issue across Canada and as part of the environmental effort, finding ways to recycle that is certainly a high priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So earlier I spoke about extended producer responsibility, which the Act, the Waste Reduction Act, gives us powers to do. So can the Minister explain what might happen to products like used oil, tires, and electronics if producers have to take responsibility for them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the key priorities in being successful with this type of work, and these types of programs, is certainly by working with the producers in how this would look going forward. But I think another really important area that we need to consider as a government is, you know, not trying to reinvent the wheel here. There are many programs across Canada and around the world that already exist to help us deal with some of these environmental waste items. So working and looking at what programs are out there that we could adapt that would fit within the context of the Northwest Territories would certainly be a way forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So how is the department engaging with producers who might make these types of products, distributors who are bringing them into the

NWT, or even local businesses who are selling them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, you know, we want to work collaboratively with the producers in developing the regulations and the programs around this and ensuring that we're also engaging with the stakeholders through the segment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So if there's a local business or a non-profit that's interested in taking these products and -- or taking waste products and creating something new out of them instead of having them go into a landfill, is any startup funding available from either ECC or other departments to help them get a project like that off the ground? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to say yes, that there are a couple of funding options that I can currently reference right at this time. So ITI provides a SEED funding option that, you know, they're always anxious to support this type of activity and new entrepreneurial opportunities within the Northwest Territories. And there's also the waste reduction and recycling initiative through the Department of ECC that has funding available to support this type of activity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 270-20(1):  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AND THE 2024-2025 BUDGET

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, NGOs have been advocating to me to not support the current budget as presented. They feel that, in their words, that they're getting lip service on their issues, their multi-year agreements are largely ignored, and inflationary cost issues continue to be a challenge and are not recognized for the merits that they're trying to explain.

So, Mr. Speaker, NGOs are worried. Ultimately the question for the finance Minister is what is she demonstrating in this budget that we're meeting those particular needs and challenges that NGOs are facing and what message of hope is she expecting me to sell them? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, going to bat to ensure that multi-year funding agreements are available is certainly something that I've already fought for and that is now quite widely available, and we'll certainly be dulling that down, that message, as I know my deputy minister already has with his colleagues at my request, that multi-year funding agreements are available. They've been available for the government for a long time. They come with the caveat that we only approve budgets here once a year. That applies to every department and everything we do, including the contribution agreements we have with NGOs. But certainly, to the extent that we can have programs, you know, that are funded -- or performed by an NGO, there's some that it's very simply obvious that they're very likely that they're going to continue to get support. There are those multi-year agreements. If it's federally funded, I have no control over that. Federally funded agreements, we can't have multi-year agreements because of the federal rules on that.

As far as, again, allowing NGOs to go and to speak to the department that provides them a contribution agreement, there too, there has been a change in the last government allowing there to be forced growth submissions on behalf of those providing these essential services. Individual departments will provide each of those agreements with their individual NGOs who are providing services on their behalf. So I'd like to know if there's one that hasn't seen that kind of an opportunity, then I can get to speak to them on a one-on-one basis or the relevant department can. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll provide that specific to the Minister. She's asked me who, I'll let her know. Mr. Speaker, she is in charge of FMB policies which are the overarching financial policies. Would the Minister open up a discussion with NGOs to ensure that our financial management policies do actually reflect their needs? So in other words, things like multi-year agreements are the standard unless, and that type of discussion with them? So in other words, would the Minister be willing to open up that type of discussion to the NGO groups? Because we met with them right after getting elected, and they're feeling largely ignored. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I may be responsible for financial management board management, the Premier's office is responsible for the relationship with NGOs. And right now, in EIA's business plans for the next four years, there's a significant amount of work planned out to happen in this space to ensure that there's the advisory group that is formed to

provide exactly the kind of feedback that the Member is asking and that the recommendations from the report of, I believe 2023, can be looked at towards implementation. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, and I appreciate that. And the Minister didn't say away as in, hey, I'm trying to school you. The Premier -- I appreciate you pointing it out that, yes, it does involve the Minister. So I'm saying I recognize and appreciate her tone on the response. That said, though, she is in charge of FMB which is the overarching financial policies. That's why I directed the question directly to her.

Mr. Speaker, again, perhaps maybe I can approach it this way: NGOs don't feel they're being recognized in this budget, and they feel that they're being overlooked. And I guess my question comes down to is when do we ask ourselves the tough question, through Finance that is, is why are we using them if they don't feel appreciated? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a great many struggles across this Northwest Territories right now, whether it's the public service that's struggling, whether it's NGOs delivering services that are struggling, whether it's residents who are struggling, residents in the Sahtu right now are struggling. So it is difficult to have a line item or an announceable in a budget that addresses every single one of the struggles that we are having in the territory right now coming off of four years of struggle. There's a lot of struggle. No, there is not a line item that says, this NGO. There's not a line item for individual NGOs. Individual departments must go and work with those providing essential services on their behalf. It is recognized in the sense that it's recognized in the business planning process. Significant attention is put to this regard because it now sits at EIA, which is the coordinating body that essentially coordinates every single other department so that when departments are out there working with NGOs, working in that space, it's front and center for the government right now. It really is -- again, it's really in the purview of the Premier's office, which is the highest office that it could possibly be in for this attention.

So there's not a line item, but I've spent a lot of time trying to say that in a budget of \$2.2 billion, 95 percent of that work will not get an announceable in the budget speech. 95 percent of that work won't have a line item. It's done by the departments. It's what we do every day. I'm happy to have the chance to speak about NGOs. I have a lot of residents in my riding that are very involved in NGOs. Not getting specific callout in the budget doesn't mean they're not

valued. It doesn't mean departments won't work with them. And that's why the Premier's office is leading it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just quickly back to the policy issue about revisiting our having a discussion, can we get a sense of when maybe the finance Minister could have that type of open dialogue so we can -- again, I'm trying to send a message of hope here and I'm looking for a little inspiration, so if she could kind of help me guide them and say, you're going to have valuable input on core funding inflationary issues and multi-year agreements that we'll carve into stone so we can move forward as the format, and I'm hoping she can give me that hope and inspiration. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, something that I started doing last government, and then very much looking forward to getting back into when we're not in post-election budget cycle, is to do budget dialogues. The budget dialogues was an opportunity to sit down with NGOs, for example, and it was actually out of that that was first the notion of getting to a place where we could have forced growth submissions for NGOs came from, and then it was then supported and driven by MLAs. So it is was an example, firstly, of success from the budget dialogues and frankly success from the consensus approach to budgeting. So looking forward to getting back to that process this spring in advance of the 2025-2026 year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 113-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 187-20(1): COSTS TO ACCESS  
LAND TITLES AND RED-TAPE REDUCTION

TABLED DOCUMENT 114-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 203-20(1): RCMP RESPONSE  
TO ADDICTIONS RELATED CALLS

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 187-20(1): Costs to Access Land Titles and Red-Tape Reduction; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 203-20(1): RCMP Response to Addictions Related Calls. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. Tabling of Documents. Motions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

### Motions

MOTION 32-20(1):  
INCREASING RCMP RESPONSE IN HAY  
RIVER,  
CARRIED

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to introduce a motion. Increasing RCMP Responses in Hay River.

WHEREAS the use of drugs and related violent crime is on the rise in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the road system transports drugs into the Northwest Territories and Hay River is becoming a hub for distribution of drugs throughout the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS police reporting in Hay River demonstrates that there is a rise in mischief, assault, drug trafficking, and theft under \$5000 in the community;

AND WHEREAS many residents of Hay River and other South Slave communities fear for their safety;

AND WHEREAS the mandate of the 20th Legislative Assembly is to work with law enforcement to create and strengthen tools that can be used to disrupt and combat the drug trade and associated criminal activity;

AND WHEREAS a canine unit was previously deployed in Hay River but ended in 2018, and the only canine unit in the Northwest Territories is located in Yellowknife;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Deh Cho, that the Government of the Northwest Territories reinstate the Royal Canadian Mounted Police canine unit in Hay River;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police collaborate and respond specifically to the rise in crime in Hay River;

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the violence and the rise of drugs in small communities and throughout the Northwest Territories. We know the most important -- or the most often drug are transported in the NWT by road from the provinces. Fort Resolution is just a hundred kilometers from Hay River. N'dilo, Dettah is right next door to the city of Yellowknife. And Lutselk'e is just down the road.

Mr. Speaker, as the drug trade, assault, crimes and violence increase, for example in Hay River, we see the same trend in Fort Resolution and throughout the NWT. Assault, possession of firearms, and drug trafficking are becoming more common occurrences in small communities and in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, monthly police reports for the community of Hay River shows mischief and assault are very common. Since December 2022, there have been an average of 53 calls a month related to mischief, over 1.5 calls every single day in Hay River related to mischief. During the same time, there were nearly 7.5 calls about assault per month.

Mr. Speaker, almost two assaults are being reported to the RCMP every single week in Hay River. For one example, we have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, and this is out of control. In December 2022, there were three drug-related trafficking occurrences. In April 2024, this number jumped to 16.

Mr. Speaker, this is four drug trafficking occurrences happening every week. Before the evacuation last summer, there were 16 reported theft under \$5,000 in June. This jumped to 21 thefts under 5,000 in October. The police states that there -- since the return of the evacuation, there has been an occurrence of a property crime, which is suspected to be linked to the illicit drug trade.

For residents in the South Slave region and throughout the NWT, it is beginning to feel like the drug trade is out of control. Where are these drugs travelling? We see more drugs and weapons like brass knuckles being used in small communities in the NWT. This is why today I bring forward a motion, second by the Member from the Deh Cho. I also bring in issue to the social development committee as an issue for my riding and residents in NWT.



This issue should be brought up with the Minister of Justice in the social development committee and to ask the question today to restore the K-9 unit in Hay River. This unit to exist is a tool that the police enforcement can use to transport them to dismantle the drug trade in small communities in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, in the 20th Assembly, we put forward four priorities. The fourth priority is safe residents and communities. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, we need to protect our residents in the NWT and do whatever we can so our communities, and especially our elders and vulnerable children, feel safe and want to remain in small communities. This is why I bring forward this motion today, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are all impacted by the drug trade here in the Northwest Territories, especially in the small communities. I get calls daily from residents very frustrated. And at the same time, the RCMP's hands are tied because of policies. And right now as it is, I've experienced calls from young people that are looking at how to get out of it, and sometimes there's just no help.

So, Mr. Speaker, as a former leader in my community, the drug trade is alive and well. It's running rampant throughout the Northwest Territories. And as my colleague mentioned earlier from Monfwi is that it's out of control. And we got to figure out a way how we could give the tools needed to the RCMP to combat this issue. And this is just the beginning. I don't expect this thing to happen overnight, but I think if we are able to start looking for solutions, this is one of them. So, Mr. Speaker, I will introduce this motion today, and I ask for the Members' support on this. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. To the motion. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I, too, concur with everything that the Member for Tu Nedhe said about the safety in the communities. My community too is affected. All my communities in my riding are affected because they're along the highway. This motion is important for the safety and well-being of residents in my riding, and this motion also falls within the priorities of this government.

In my community, there's the increase of crimes, assaults, thefts, break and enters, and these are all attributed to drugs that are coming into our communities. Having a K-9 unit available to the RCMP in our community with help with combatting the drug issues that we're facing in our communities. So with that, I will be

supporting -- I am supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. To the motion. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand and support this motion, and I thank the Member for bringing it forward. This is -- as he stated very clearly, this is not one community's issue. It is not a small community issue; it's not a Yellowknife issue; this is an issue for everyone. Everyone in the Northwest Territories, regardless of where they are in -- which is shocking when you consider how far-flung and remote some of our communities are. When it comes to this K-9 unit, this is a very specialized unit of police that serves an essential role in helping combat drug trafficking and helping tackle drug crimes in communities.

There used to be a unit in Hay River, and it was moved to Yellowknife. And my understanding is now that is -- Yellowknife allows it to be mobile, Mr. Speaker. But I understand where the intention of this is. So it is deployed throughout the Northwest Territories, but I think more of this specialized type of work is important. It's important to have these resources, especially as Hay River is the hub of the North, and it is a place where it's the first port of entry for many people. And, unfortunately, that includes drug traffickers and gangsters. And having these resources close to the hub, close to the border, is only going to help us fight against these predators and take back our communities. So I support this 100 percent. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh bringing this motion. I think it's a wise -- it's a very targeted motion, which is in other words of saying here's a problem and here's a straightforward solution, and I recognize his work and advocacy on this issue, and I think the community -- his communities are lucky to have him. I also want to thank the Member for Deh Cho for speaking passionately about this issue. I mean, without her support on this, you know, I mean, it's nice to see great support, you know, to get on this particular topic. Again, good Members all working together.

Mr. Speaker, the motion speaks for itself. It's connected as a solution to help address and deter, stop in any way possible, drugs and the crime that comes with it. I don't want to dwell; in

other words, I don't want to speak too detailed. But, I mean, we've seen the impacts even in the South Slave on how drug crime can lead to terrible, if not horrific things, as we remember what happened in that tragedy so many years ago. You know, that wasn't just a terrible accident of circumstances. That was a reflection of violent terrible crime, Mr. Speaker. Could a drug dog have solved that at the time? I don't know. But I can tell you all I can say is this: Drug crime is getting worse in the Northwest Territories and we need to use every tool in our toolbox and find more tools to put in our toolbox and go to anywhere we can do any work, Mr. Speaker. This problem isn't isolated in the South Slave but that said, we got to start somewhere, and we shouldn't be afraid to say, hey, there, maybe then we can look at moving one north or establishing one north in those communities. Again it's not a reflection of the communities themselves, it's the fact that this is the pressure and response they need because they're being weighed down on this, Mr. Speaker.

So I will support this motion without any hesitation, and I want to clearly articulate whatever money needs to be done to address this particular issue, I fully support. Bring forward a supp, and I'll be championing it amongst anybody who wants to challenge it, I'll say, no, this is wrong, and this is what we need to do to respond. So I say bring on the money. I'm behind this initiative. Good job to my colleagues on this side of the House. Again, demonstrating and meeting the needs of regular people, including our communities. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the motion. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting this motion. For all I've said in this Chamber and outside of this Chamber, direct to the point, let find solutions and move on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. To the motion. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting this motion. You know, it's hard to see your people suffer, your family members, your community members. It's hard to see them suffer. And trying to find a solution to this ongoing problem, it's hard. I hope this motion will start the process. We've tried every avenue. We've met with the RCMP. We've met with Indigenous leaders, governments. We're just having a tough time dealing with this ongoing battle. Like I stated, it's hard to see

your family members suffering. They don't know how much they're suffering, and the drug dealers from southern Canada are the ones that are imposing this undue stress on our family members. They come up here, and they take the lives of our loved ones. We have a lot of educated people, members in our communities, that are lost to this drug. I know a lot of family members who are well educated, had good jobs, went to college, but now they're actually fighting for their lives. They don't know how much they've impacted their immediate family, their children. They don't know how much they've impacted their community, all the resources that are trying to help them. We just need help, and I hope this motion will bring forward some security. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. To the motion. Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say that I disagree with much of what has been said today, and I've heard much of this from my MLA colleague from Hay River, the MLA for Hay River South, as well as the previous MLA for Hay River South, as well as myself as MLA for Hay River North. So I definitely recognize the scope of this issue. The government will be taking our time to formulate a response to this, so we will be abstaining from this vote, but we'll come back with a response in 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh to close.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I keep thinking about the people in the small communities that this issue has impacted. I have family, friends, relatives, like my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta talked about. You know, this motion I will say be for them and also for the ones we lost.

So I want to thank my colleagues. And I look forward to working with Cabinet on this issue, and my colleagues are also looking at supporting this, a way to make this thing happen. So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say mahsi to my colleagues and to my friends as well, this is for you. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask for a recorded vote. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):**

The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. Those abstaining, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):**

The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, those in favour, ten. Opposed, zero. Abstentions, seven. The motion has been passed.

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 7:

#### MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT 2024

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Tuesday, June 11th, 2024, I will present Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act 2024, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### BILL 8:

#### AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Tuesday, June 11th, 2024, I will present to the House Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Minister's Statement

24-20(1), Tabled Document 93-20(1), Tabled Document 111-20(1).

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as speaker under Rule 2.24, I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the House business, with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Committee of the Whole wishes to consider Tabled Document 93-20(1), 2024-2025 Main Estimates, the Legislative Assembly, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree? Thank you. We'll take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 93-20(1), Main Estimates 2024-2025. We will now consider the Legislative Assembly.

Does the Speaker wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the chambers.

Thank you. Would the Speaker introduce his witnesses.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Glen Rutland, clerk of the Legislative Assembly. And on my right is Kim Wickens, deputy clerk of the Legislative Assembly, deputy clerk members and precinct services.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree to forego general comments on the Legislative Assembly?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** So if we could proceed to the details contained in the tabled document. Committee, we will defer the Legislative Assembly summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with expenditure on behalf of the Members starting on page 8. Are there any questions? Seeing none, no further questions, please turn to page 9.

The Legislative Assembly expenditure on behalf of Members, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$10,512,000. Does the committee agree? Show of hands.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer beginning on page 10, with information items on page 12. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 11.

Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$582,000. Does the committee agree? By show of hands.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the Office of the Clerk, beginning on page 13 with information items on page 15. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as a first-time MLA, I have noticed that in our regular work when we are broadcast to the public, both in our committee work and here on this floor, there have been issues with technical difficulties, audio/visual difficulties, and I was wondering maybe if the Speaker or his staff could speak to if any budget is contemplated in the Office of the Clerk for renewing the systems? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With your permission, I'll turn discussion to Ms. Wickens, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy clerk.

**MS. KIM WICKENS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Member for the question. So back in 2022, the Legislative Assembly instituted a phased approach to update both the broadcasting and interpretation systems within

the Legislative Assembly. Prior to the 20th Assembly, what we did was upgrade all the interpretation systems so that Members could also be understood as well as speak their official languages in the Chamber as well as our committee rooms. The second phase of the approach is to actually update the technology within the Chamber. And there's no line item within the main estimates at this time. What we're doing is exploring options, and then hopefully you'll see that in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chair

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to deputy clerk for that answer. I ask simply because it's important that the people of the NWT see and hear us and see our deliberations in all of our capacities. So making sure we have systems that work, pretty important. So that's more a comment than anything. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Any Members that want to speak to on page 15? The Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** On page 15, more in the Office of the Clerk there. The summary, I'm looking at the House procedure and committees, and I see an increase in there, which is good. I just want some detail or clarification. Is it the Assembly committees that are getting this increase? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I thank the Member for the question. It's just for our reorganization as we move forward, so yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I totally support that increase there, and I just hope it's sufficient funding as I really see a need for some of these committees, particularly the social development committee, having to travel out to the communities of impact, some areas are more impacted than others, and I always find it more beneficial to sit face-to-face with the community leaders in their home setting and that'll give a better understanding of the various committees and the organizational structure of this Assembly and better understand how we function as a government to address the problems out in the communities. So that is more of a support notice for the increase to the committees. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. I'm going to go to any other Members that want to have any questions. Seeing none, thank you. No further questions, please turn to page 14.

Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$10,408,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the Office of the Speaker, beginning on page 16 with information items on page 18. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 17.

Legislative Assembly, Office of the Speaker, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$552,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the statutory offices, beginning on page 19 with information items on page 22 and 23. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page -- oh sorry. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You're moving so quickly I can barely even get my hand up.

Yeah, I wanted to ask about the Integrity Commissioner's office. When the Integrity Commissioner presented to the Standing Committee on Government Ops that they've kind of indicated again and again, over the years, that they simply don't have the capacity to be responding to the volume of requests that they were getting in in a timely manner. And, you know, as the Commissioner's annual report shows, the time in responding to average requests, it takes quite a long time.

I'm just wondering if there -- you know, I note that the office has actually been reduced since 2022-2023. I'd just like to hear from the Speaker's office or staff on the Integrity Commissioner and whether they feel that office could be increased?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Speaker with the question.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. I'd like to turn it to the deputy clerk, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go to the deputy clerk.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I'll go to the clerk. Mr. Clerk.

**MR. GLEN RUTLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Member could just clarify, is it the Integrity Commissioner or the Information and Privacy Commissioner?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And yeah, I appreciate the clarification. I was trying to move quickly here because we were flipping through the pages so fast. Information and Privacy Commissioner is what I'm looking at. I was looking at the wrong numbers. I do note that the budget has gone up since 2022-2023, but yeah, just wondering about the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office and whether they are getting the resources they need to respond to requests in a timely manner.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Speaker.

**MS. KIM WICKENS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, for the Information and Privacy Commissioner, that office has actually increased in numbers. The previous, back in 2021, they had just the Commissioner and an admin position. We did a full review of that office, and they received two additional positions. At this time, each year, what we do is each statutory office presents to the board of management to identify any particular resources that they might need. When the Information and Privacy Commissioner came before the board, they didn't identify any additional resources at this time. They're fully staffed within the office. And so we potentially could see a request next year but there was no request this year for additional resources within that office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, deputy clerk. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** That's it for me for questions on this page. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Any other Members that have questions? No further questions, please turn to page 20.

Legislative Assembly, statutory offices, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$4,221,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, please return now to the Legislative

Assembly summary found on page 5, with information items on page 6 and 7. Are there any questions? Seeing none, no further questions, committee, I will now call the Legislative Assembly summary.

Legislative Assembly -- oh sorry, I didn't see your hand. I'm going to go back to the Member from the Deh Cho. Okay, thank you. Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call the Legislative Assembly summary.

Legislative Assembly, operations expenditure, total department of 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$26,275,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

COMMITTEE MOTION 27-20(1):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 93-20(1): 2024-2025  
MAIN ESTIMATES – LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY – DEFERRAL OF LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY,  
CARRIED

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the main estimates for the Legislative Assembly at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour by show of hands. All those opposed, show of hands. Okay, the motion is carried. Consideration of the Legislative Assembly, operations expenditure of 2024-2025 Main Estimates, total Legislative Assembly, is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers.

Committee, we will now move on to the next department. What is the wish of the committee? Member of the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** (audio)

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** We now consider Tabled Document 93-20(1), 2024-2025 Main Estimates. We will now consider the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Does the Minister of

Environment and Climate Change wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right, I have Erin Kelly, deputy minister. And on my left, I have director of finance, Jessica St. Arnaud.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does committee agree to forego general comments on the Department of Environment and Climate Change?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Seeing no more general comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we will now defer the department summary and review the estimates by activity and summary briefing beginning with corporate management, starting on page 83 with information items on page 86. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Minister of Finance, yesterday when I was asking her about evaluation capacity throughout the government, mentioned that the Department of ECC is working on building an evaluation capacity within the department. Can the Minister speak to that a bit, please. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, since the merger of the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Lands, the department has been working and have a couple of staff that are directly assigned to this task. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I just want to confirm, from what I heard yesterday, making sure it's applicable for the department, is the intent to evaluate one or two programs every fiscal? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the intent is to evaluate all of the programs over time. It's not necessarily specifically defined how many will be done annually. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nothing further right now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Any further questions? Okay, thank you. No further questions, please turn to page 84.

Environment and Climate Change, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$10,329,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the environmental management, monitoring and climate change, beginning on page 87 with information items on 91. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page -- oh I'm sorry, my apologies. I'll go to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So on page 89, under the item water research and monitoring (aquatic quality and hydrology), it looks like the budget has gone from, in 2022-2023, from \$483,000 and then last year's budget \$370,000, and now we're down to \$346,000.

Can the department explain why the amount of money for water research and monitoring has been going down over the last two fiscal years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister to the question.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The decrease was a result of a one-time supp. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister give further clarity or information as to how these budgets are developed? I mean, it looks like contributions supporting academic research and monitoring. So do we just sort of wait until we hear from an academic institution as to what kind of research and monitoring they plan to do and then our budgets shift accordingly, or do we have a role in how these things are planned or making sure that we have priority projects that are being researched each year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. They are planned activities, and they are worked around engagement of different academics that show areas of interest. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. Can the Minister give any examples of what kinds of water research and monitoring work is being done this year versus things that were being done last year?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For that level of detail, I'll pass to deputy minister Kelly. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

**DR. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the way the money is spent is dependent on what the activities are in a work plan, and we engage with experts depending on what the needs are for that particular work plan. That's why the budget fluctuates. So an example would be sometimes we've done work on groundwater, for example, or if there's an element of a knowledge agenda that we're looking into, we would engage with the appropriate folks. Another example from the water perspective would be some of the expertise we needed to review the reports that were being created by Alberta with respect to regulation of oil sands. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's fine for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Any further questions? I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the transboundary waters, there looks like there's a significant -- like, almost half of a decrease. Can the Minister explain why the -- from 480 to 285, what is the decrease? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, again, the decrease is the result of a one-time supp for a carryover from 2023-2024. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** No further questions, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at page 89, the Mackenzie River Basin Board. I see there's continued allowance there of \$40,000 for this activity. Could the Minister explain the roles and responsibilities or activities for this basin board. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll pass to deputy minister Kelly for that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the deputy minister.

**DR. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Mackenzie River Basin Board is under a master agreement that includes Canada, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, BC, and Saskatchewan within the Mackenzie River basin. And this is the board that manages activities for that agreement. There's a traditional knowledge group as well as some technical groups that inform the board members. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member for the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks, Dr. Kelly, for that explanation.

My next question is there any plans for this group or this organization to expose themselves or give the public exposure and have meetings, say, in the Sahtu that we're the greatest region in the whole 650-kilometer watershed impacted by the low waters of Mackenzie. So is there any planned meetings for this board in the Sahtu? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, no there are no current meetings planned. They do have a website, and they meet under the water strategy, and this is what brings the input to the board. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** I've got nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** No further questions. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister please explain the increase in the line item in 2024-2025 from the main to revised estimates and now here in the main estimates in 2024-2025 for the line item of environmental protection and waste management, what caused us to go so far over and is there continuing cost pressures? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the variance of the \$542,000 between 2023 Actuals and the 2023 Main Estimates is due to an increase related to expenses related to contaminated sites that were not covered by the environmental liabilities fund. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I guess my assumption, then, is that's been contemplated for these main estimates? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

Okay, I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The question I have is looking at the Mackenzie River Basin Board, and the Minister or the -- one of his witnesses did mention that this is the place where they work with the regions



and the territories and the provinces. They also have traditional knowledge people that they work with with the board. And my colleague asked about whether or not they were doing any kind of work with the people. Given that we had such a low water level this year, is there any work that's going to be done with the elders, bringing the elders and scientists together to talk about what is going on with the climate with the low water levels in the Mackenzie River? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the department provides regular information to the community members as well as the Indigenous and other governments across the Northwest Territories on water levels in the Mackenzie basin as well the tributaries. The annual water stewardship strategy workshop is the actual mechanism that brings those folks together to have those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Next on my list I've got the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I note that the Northwest Territories environmental audit falls into this area. My first question is, is this the area where I would be asking questions about implementation of recommendations of the audit?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you for that clarification. So I'm just going to note -- we don't need to turn to it, but in page 48 of the business plan, it's noted that the department will be facilitating and implementing recommendations from the 2025 audit. Can the department fill me in on how many recommendations directed at the department have been fulfilled from the 2020 environmental audit?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there were 32

recommendations that resulted from the 2020 audit, two of which are complete. 21, which are in progress but have fulfilled the purpose of the audit, but some of those are ongoing despite the fact that they've met the request out of the audit itself. And nine additional items are in progress. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Over to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now, Mr. Chair, in the Minister or department's opinion, looking forward to the 2025 audit and of course completion of the 2020 one -- the 2020 audit is what I mean, not 2021 -- does the department feel that they are adequately resourced to respond to those recommendations in a timely manner?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll look to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, thank you for the question. We do feel that we are adequately resourced. Some of the processes from the audit are just long in required time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So if Members were hoping to see kind of a more accelerated response to audit recommendations noting that it relates to one of the key mandate commitments of the government and how closely this relates to kind of regulatory effectiveness and the audit recommendations kind of pointing to creating better effectiveness within our regulatory system, again I'd just ask the question, does the department feel they're adequately resourced to respond to the 2025 audit in expedient fashion? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll look to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we feel that we are adequately resourced in this area. There are certain segments of the audit that require contributions from others that are not necessarily in -- the timelines aren't within our control. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I appreciate those answers from the department. Always appreciate hearing that a Minister feels that they have got the resources they need. You know, I think it's obvious that this is one that is

important to me and I do want to see the department prioritizing, and I think it's an important part of getting effectiveness out of that mandate commitment. So, yeah, I just want the Minister to keep the House up to date if they're being resourced adequately to move on those recommendations quickly.

I'm just going to move over to the CIMP program, Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program. Does this program specifically -- how do I word this? Is the program directly related to reducing climate change impacts in the Northwest Territories? Sorry, a better way to put it, is the department directly related to reducing carbon output of the Northwest Territories with this...

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program does not contribute directly to that. We have climate change programs within the department that would be more related to that particular outcome. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all the questions I have on this department at this time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing none, please turn to page 84.

Environment and Climate Change, corporate management, operations expenditure summary -- no further questions? Please turn to page 88.

Environment and Climate Change, environmental management, monitoring and climate change, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$21,815,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to policy and strategic planning, beginning on page 92 with information items on page 96. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So given that the department in their business plan has highlighted a great deal of sustainable livelihoods activities, partnerships, and programming under encouraging community wellness, I'm curious as to the difference between the revised estimates of 2023-2024

and the main estimates of 2024-2025, noting, of course, that it's an increase from the mains of the last fiscal, which is great but, yeah, just looking for the full story here, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, one moment, please.

The variance of \$1.081 million between 2022-2023 Actuals and the 2023-2024 Main Estimates is due to carryovers of funding from 2022-2023 for cost sharing agreements related to the nature fund, Deh Cho conservation, and protected areas of Inuvialuit-owned lands, and therefore increased spending. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you for that answer. Noting that I might actually be a reduction on this line item, could the Minister please speak to the reduction in the policy legislation evaluation and communications from last year's expenditures. Thank you. And it's actually quite significant as compared to 2022-2023. I expect this might be in part due to efficiencies from the merger but just curious. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the decrease of \$862,000 between 2023-2024 Revised Main Estimates and the 2024-2025 Main Estimates is due to reduction of five positions - director of policy, manager of policy, manager of legislation, manager of communications, and an administrative assistant, and a reduction in annual printing costs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm assuming, yes, that's a yes, it's due to the merger and also the reduction of printing costs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister to the question.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's a yes. My apologies.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave. No further questions?

Next on my list I have the Member from Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is I see quite a reduction to the nature fund protected areas. You got three candidates there. Three candidates there, and they took quite a drastic cut.

Can the Minister explain the rationale behind these cuts? I'm curious to see if there is a contribution agreement or a conservation agreement that might be jeopardized in this reduction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the reduction of this line item was due to the sunset of an agreement with the federal government and related to associated funding. The ongoing and continued work will be addressed through the potential project finance for permanence initiative with the Government of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there any discussions going on to reactivate that sunset? Can the Minister explain. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I indicated there is an initiative, the project finance for permanence, which is an initiative between Indigenous governments and the federal government. Related to that in relation to the Department of Environment and Climate Change, there is a bilateral nature agreement that is in the discussion phase right now that would support that work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to the Minister for that information on potential renewals.

My next question is related, further on down the line, to the traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge is a local science, which I think everybody respects and have gained with practical experience living on the land. In recognition of that talent or that experience, is there any movement or initiatives by this department in that area to look at a knowledge economy in recognition of the traditional

knowledge that we have out there in our territory? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister to the question.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'll pass that to Dr. Kelly for a reply, please. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

**DR. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Traditional knowledge is factored into initiatives across the department, not just in this particular line item. So all of the different activities in the main estimates have aspects of traditional knowledge. For like a specific piece, in this work we do in the sustainable livelihoods, there's lots of work on traditional knowledge. And we have a traditional knowledge action plan that has been developed from input with Indigenous governments that's under development at this time too. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to deputy minister Kelly there for providing that information. So it does exist. I'm just curious, I had the privilege of travelling on a scheduled flight from Deline and there was a student doing an ice monitoring survey in Deline on the Great Bear Lake ice situation and the movements and so on. So the study required her to stay there at length. Is there any initiatives underway with the department to work with the Laurier Institute, I think it is. They have an office here on the first floor of the Scotia Centre. That individual that I encountered or interacted with does. She's a student to the Laurier Institute, and they do have an office here. I'm just wondering if there is some common interest from your office to work with the Sir Wilfred Laurier office here in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, yes, the department has a longstanding relationship with Sir Wilfred Laurier University and supports research in many aspects of the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** No further questions there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member for the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is about disaster compensation, 225. How many cabins that were lost in the wildfire of last year, does the Minister know how many of the cabins that were lost and compensated from last year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister to the question.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a specific number as to the number of cabins that were lost, but I am aware that there were 33 claims related to compensation under the disaster compensation program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Of those 33, how many were given their grants? Thank you. Or paid out.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of those claims were successfully resolved to date. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** The reason I'm asking is I have people calling me and saying that they didn't get anything from -- they lost their cabin last year in the fire, in the wildfire, and they didn't get anything. So is there some way that maybe their application didn't get looked at or it didn't get in, or? I just need that information so I could bring it back to some of these. They were in the Hay River, Deh Cho region. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, those requests can go directly to the regional office, the regional superintendent for follow up. There is no cutoff date on the actual program submission, so there is still opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I have no further questions right now. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. No further questions, please turn to page 93.

Environment and Climate Change, policy and strategic planning, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$13,322,000.

Read this part out again. The Environment and Climate Change, policy and strategic planning, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$13,332,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the regional operation, beginning on page 97 with information items on page 99. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 98.

Environment and Climate Change, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$7,212,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to regulatory assessment and authorizations, beginning on page 100 with information items on page 103. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 101.

Environment and Climate Change, regulatory assessment and authorization, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$10,339,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to wildlife and forest management, beginning on page 104 with information items on page 108. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So under forest management, there is a section for forest resources. I believe they are helping in terms of the supporting the forest industry as outlined in the business plan, but maybe the Minister could confirm. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go to the Member from from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Minister. I wasn't entirely sure.

So under the business plan, one of the actions to support economic activities includes supporting a forest industry development, and I note that over time -- sorry, had it here a moment ago.

Yes, I do. Okay, so in 2022-2023, it was \$75,000. 2023-2024 it was \$50,000. And now it's reduced again to \$25,000. So I guess my question to the Minister is, you know, how are we going to support a forest industry with a diminishing budget line? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, despite the reduced budget line item here, there are other programs that are available to fund this work, and there are also potential partnerships that the department is exploring. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, yeah, I know it's not necessarily always the budget line item here that would make all the difference, but I guess could the Minister speak more to what they're exploring to support the forest industry. I know there's interest on the Regular MLAs' side to see that industry flourish. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, currently, there are forestry management agreements in place with many Indigenous governments that have just recently been completed over the last several years. But we are also primarily exploring a federal funding option to support the industry. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Minister for that.

Switching gears ever so slightly and moving into wildlife, I notice that the contributions on page 106, caribou monitoring, remote sensing, monitoring and range planning, all of these line items are reducing. Could the Minister please speak to whether, you know, that's sort of just a cyclical nature of range planning and monitoring herds or if there's more funding that needs to be found in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is the result of a reallocation of some of the contracts and some small sunsets on some of the funding that was funding these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Only really one more question. I understand that the reason the line item in forest management is so high in the actuals from last year is due to the unprecedented season. I can respect that. I know we fund that with supps. Whether I think that's the best way to go about things or not really doesn't matter to me, I'll leave that up to the Minister and his department. But why is compliance and officer services gone down over the last two years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the 2023-2024 Main Estimates were \$713,000, which are the same as the 2024-2025 Main Estimates for compliance and officer services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I take it that was the last question, or you had more questions? Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. And thank you, yes -- I'm sorry, I'm reading the 2022-2023 Actuals as being slightly higher than that. I was just curious. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my question is about the fire damage compensation grants are available to hunters and trappers to replace equipment lost as a result of a wildfire -- forest fires. What is considered equipment? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think if the Member would like a detailed description what would qualify under the program, we could certainly provide that information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member for the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Okay, great, thank you. My other question is how many applications were received for this grant from last year's wildfire? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that essentially reflects back to the number that I had mentioned earlier, around the 33 claims. With some of those claims, they were group claims so there was multiple participants on one claim application that was supported by local Indigenous governments or Indigenous organizations.

And maybe I can just briefly add to the previous question that items used for traditional hunting and trapping activities would sort of be a summary of the list, if you will. So it could be fairly broad. And I think it's -- yes, there is some latitude there in how it's looked at depending on case by case. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And another question I have is because of some of these things were lost in the wildfire and these are located out in areas that are not close to a community, the question I have is any of this going to be used for disposal of some of the stuff that's left out on the land? Like, is this part of that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My apologies, could you repeat the last part of that question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Deh Cho Member.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Is there -- in this compensation, is that -- because you're giving out a grant to it, are you giving out -- does this grant look at how -- or is it going to cover the disposal of the equipment that was lost in the wildfires? Because they're being left out on the land. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, that's not considered as part of the program. The details of what's eligible within the program information could be obtained for your member that are interested through the local ECC office, and they'd be very, very happy

to support any applications or provide any information that was requested.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. That's -- I have another question. That's just about that disposal of burnt equipment or lost equipment that is sometimes might be left on the land when people leave their campsite that got burned down. So I was just asking about that one. But that's probably another question for a different area in ECC. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you for the comment. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I got a couple questions on this activity here. The first one is I had the opportunity of touring the regional, at the time, ENR office here. It was during the summer months, and I was quite impressed with the monitoring global satellite technology that could be done sitting from a chair and watching what's going on out on the land. And with our experiences from the disasters of last year, what process or steps is in the decision-making for the initial attack decision to go or not to go to that particular fire? Like, what happens in that initial stage?

We keep hearing some stories about oh, the government always waits for it to get too big and then they say okay, well, let's send the bombers. But with that technology to identify fires that are out there, what happens in that phase? When is the decision made to send the bomber over there to blow it out? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the tools that the Member is speaking of, in the way of satellite detection or remote sensing, is just one of the tools in the toolbox that is used to fight fire. Typically by the time you can actually see that fire on that fire map, it's to a size that is beyond the ideal size for initial attack. So primarily when you're talking about the initial attack phase of what you fight or what you don't fight, there are many contributing factors. Weather forecast, proximity to communities, availability of resources, all of these things are factored in at the time. And whether or not -- when we deploy aircraft in support of firefighting activities, that's primarily for initial attack. The point of the aircraft is, you know, to reduce the fire activity to allow the folks on the ground to go out and put the fire out because that's really the

resource that puts the fire out at the end of the day.

So I think it's a challenging question to answer from a single perspective, but it's certainly, you know, is something that within our policy. Obviously, the preservation of life is the number 1 priority, and that would definitely be the first contributing factor to determine where the initial attack activity started. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that information by the Minister. It gives me a little bit of knowledge, some of the decision management factors that are being decided on at the office there during the first initial phase.

My next question -- I'm glad for my colleague from the Deh Cho in answering compensation for trappers. In my recent visits, and as one as the other day, a fellow was talking about the loss of his cabin and the neighbours got compensation, but he didn't. So I'll use the Minister's replies to follow through and seek compensation, including the definition of equipment losses by this trapper-elder individual. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure that I understand the question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. It was more of a comment. I acknowledge -- I had the same questions as my colleague from the Deh Cho, and I'll use that, the Minister's replies to move on compensation for a similar trapper cabin owner we have in the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I want to talk a bit about boreal caribou, which have suffered tremendously with all of the forest fires. I don't think we talk about it enough in this House. But it looks like a couple years ago there was a bilateral funding agreement with the federal government to identify sites for boreal caribou habitat restoration and designing treatment trials. And I know that that expired in 2023, and I see that there's an item on this page around landscape level restoration in boreal caribou habitat for 2023-2024, but

there's nothing in this year's budget. What are the plans to move ahead with that sort of initial research that's been done in terms of actually trying to restore some boreal caribou habitat?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the department is currently working with the federal government on funding for the boreal caribou. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thanks. So can the Minister clarify that he's working to try to establish a new funding agreement with the feds that hasn't materialized yet, or that we do currently have existing funding with the feds and we're working on programs or projects with it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are currently working on an extension to the boreal caribou funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm hopeful that funding can be identified to see if we can ensure the continued existence and thriving of the boreal caribou that so many of the communities in this territory rely on.

My next question has to do with -- so we talked a bit earlier about funding for caribou monitoring that's been sunseting. There's two line items, one called caribou monitoring and the other monitoring and range planning, but it talks about supporting Indigenous governments, local communities in traditional knowledge studies and capacity building around caribou monitoring.

So has that work been scaled back, then, significantly with sunseting of funding, or have we found ways to continue the important work in traditional knowledge around caribou monitoring?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that work does continue. There's a small reduction in the budget line item, but the work certainly is continuing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And is the Minister also in the process of trying to negotiate new federal funding agreements to replace the ones that have been sunset, or is there some sort of roadmap for what kind of funding and research will be needed in coming years? I know it might not necessarily be the exact same every single year, but are we actively negotiating new funding agreements to ensure that the work that we're planning for the future is going to be fully funded? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We recently received two-year extension under section 11 for \$2.421 million for range planning. Our Two Billion Trees Project will support future replanting to support habitat restoration which will be important to meet offset requirements for future proposals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. That's it for this page.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? No further questions, please turn to page 105.

Environment and Climate Change, wildlife and forest management, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$63,178,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Additional information items on pages 109 to 118. Are there any questions? Thank you, Members. Please return now to the department summary found on page 75, with information items on pages 76 to 82. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call the department summary.

Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditure summary, total department, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$126,205,000. Does the committee agree? Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

COMMITTEE MOTION 28-20(1):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 93-20(1): 2024-2025  
MAIN ESTIMATES – ENVIRONMENT AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE – DEFERRAL OF  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE,  
CARRIED

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the main estimates for the Department of Environment and Climate Change at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Consideration of Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditure, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, total department, is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister. And thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you.

Committee, we will now move on to the next department. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Main Estimates 2024-2025, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 93-20(1), Main Estimates 2024-2025. We'll now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the chambers.

Thank you. Would the Minister introduce his witnesses.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to introduce, to my right, the deputy minister, Gary Brennan. And to my right, director of corporate affairs, Jennifer Young.



**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree to forego general comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled documents?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Agreed. Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity beginning with community governance starting on page 339 with information items on page 342. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 340.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$2,136,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to community government learning and development, beginning on page 343 with information items on page 346. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 344.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community government learning and development, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$2,565,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to community operations, beginning on page 347 with information items on page 350. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 348.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$2,098,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to directorate, beginning on page 351 with information items on page 354. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is more of a policy question than a main estimates question, and I'm doing my best to assume that it should possibly live under directorate.

So under the department's business plan on page 228, one of the actions that they are doing to support the mandate is to engage regularly with the NWTAC and the LGANT on key community government related issues. And it's really more of a general comment but also kind of a question.

The measure for this action is the number of meetings between either the Minister or official level meetings held between MACA and these organizations, or just NWTAC I suppose, per year. How does the Minister feel that demonstrates the success -- to successfully partner with these organizations? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. MACA has a good working relationship with the NWTAC and LGANT, and we tried to have as many meetings as possible with them, so I guess this is just a minimum amount of a meeting that we're dedicating to have these meetings with NWTAC. So, I mean, this isn't just three and that's it; this is we're going to continually meet with them and continue our mutual relationship with NWTAC and LGANT.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I don't mean to pick on the Minister of MACA precisely on this, it's just I don't see how a quantitative measure -- it doesn't matter how many times you meet with these organizations it doesn't really demonstrate the depth of the partnership. It doesn't really demonstrate if -- you know, if people feel heard. And so it's just a comment to maybe improve that metric in the business plan however you might see fit. And if the Minister has comments, I'd love to hear them.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** I guess just to reply to her comment, I mean, our continued relationship is that MACA works closely with NWTAC on numerous programs and funding agreements and so on. So, like, the three meetings that are showing here are essentially a minimum at least but to the point of that sometimes hard to get together, and that's our goal, is to make sure that we maintain that. And then, like I said, we're always going to meet with them at some point, right. Like, it's not something that we're not going to do, being that we have a good relationship with them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, yeah, I suppose the real question -- and thank you to my colleague who just shoved a note in my face -- is what outcome are you seeking? The number of meetings doesn't really matter, right. What is the outcome that you want from these meetings, and I guess that's my question to the Minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you. I'm going to pass this off to Jennifer here.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are cognisant that it just seems like an output number when we're looking at three meetings per year. The actuality is that we have made this commitment to them to do this back in 2002, but we haven't actually been able to meet the three times a year given events that we've had with wildfires and COVID. So as a result of that, we are putting this in place in the business plan to show our commitment to work towards this three times a year more meaningfully.

And in terms of the outcomes that we're trying to achieve, it's to work with each other to assure that we're continuing to have that ongoing dialogue about our shared interests with regard to community governments and what they're planning and doing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you for clarifying that a bit more, to the Minister. And what I will say, and I'll leave it at this, is just, you know, we all heard from NWTAC when we were all new Members in this Assembly, and they are definitely vocal about everything that they are wanting from this government, and I really hope that the partnership deepens and becomes even more close over the next three meetings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Any further questions on this page item, 354? No further questions, please turn to page 352.

Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$4,157,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to emergency management, beginning on page 355 with information on pages 357. Are there any questions? Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what we've heard from communities is that there's a huge gap in the kinds of funding that's available for emergency preparation and sort of avoidance and management. So I know that MACA provides some supports at the very earliest stage of, you know, theoretically coming up with sort of frameworks and very sort of broad plans, but then there's really no funding available between that very early stage and then once -- the next time funding is available is if widespread damage has already occurred. You know, you can get money after the fact if disaster has befallen your community, although not always in that case either. But we are not really incentivising people to do the work necessary to prepare community infrastructure, to make sure that there's people in the community that are properly trained to actually implement these theoretical plans that, you know, are discussed at the very early stages.

So to give one example, if there's a community that is living -- that's next to the Mackenzie River and they know that there could be, you know, ice jams and flooding each year, they might have a theoretical plan but if what we need to do is find funding to actually move buildings further away from the river or, you know, even if water were rising and, as a precautionary measure, they needed to move people out and evacuate people just in case disaster befell them, I'm not aware that there's actually any funding available for them to go ahead and do that. So there's every incentive in place just to wait until the disaster already happens and, you know, houses are already damaged and people are already hurt, because that's the only time you're going to get funding. So this seems to me totally backwards in terms of how we're creating incentives for people to actually avoid disaster in the first place.

Can the Minister speak to what steps are being taken to actually assist communities and find funding for them for all of the stages in between, you know, creating this theoretical framework and disaster having already happened? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess for the main part -- I think there's a few little steps in there, but I guess for the main part,

some of the PREP emergency preparedness stuff, there's a lot of it that's not funded, unfortunately. However, communities can use some of their O and M for basic emergency preparedness, but I mean it doesn't cover off everything, obviously. Municipal and Community Affairs has programs to assist in, you know, developing emergency plans and being -- you know, getting prepared for an emergency; however, when it comes down to, like as she was stating, moving a building, I don't believe there's any full funds out there to assist in that type of preparedness. And depending on what kind of building it might be, you might not even be able to move it, so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. What about funding or supports for people to do precautionary, say, evacuations or even just moving of people from one part of the community to another if there's an imminent threat of something like a flood? Is there any funding available to that, or is the Minister interested in advocated for that kind of funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm looking to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're constantly advocated for funding for preparedness, and I think all the provinces and territories are doing the same. So when it comes down to, like, a full-fledged evacuation of a community based on an emergency, DFA would probably quick in at that point and then there would be the opportunity to utilize some of the funds in regards to evacuation hosting and stuff like that that is in the evacuation policy. Yeah, that's it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the Minister advocating internally to his own Cabinet to allocate more resources to communities in the territory for the funding the work on the ground that needs to be done to prepare for emergencies beyond just, you know, the theoretical frameworks? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department continually works with municipalities who are, I guess, the knowledge-keepers for the area or for the

region who would know what hazards might be upon them, and the department continually works with the municipalities to help develop their emergency plans and be prepared for any kind of emergency that might be coming on, whether it be fire, flood, or weather, or power outages or anything like that. So the emergency preparedness part is there with supports for the communities, and the department will be there to support them through that. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to reiterate once again that there's a difference between putting something on a piece of paper and then the funding that's required to actually implement the things that are on the paper in terms of, okay, well, we need to actually do these things and expend resources to actually do the preparations that might be laid out on the piece of paper in the plan to actually help prevent an emergency or prevent the severity of it. So I'll leave it there for now, but I think it's important that we think through all the stages of emergency management and make sure that each one is actually funded appropriately. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you for your comments. I'm going to continue on now to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question on this activity is, is the department working with the Sahtu communities, and all communities for that matter, on having sessions with the local governments here for your awareness to the emergency response plans per each community? Has that dialogue been started with the local governments there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the department is working with the Sahtu community governments. So some of the governments have community plans that are going far back as, let's say, November 2011, so there is work that obviously needs to be done and the department is working with and communicating with those communities to develop updated community plans. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member for the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to the Minister for that response there. Safety is paramount in all operations, whether

you're working in private sector or industry. Having worked in a number of sectors here, it was quite common that we have a fire drill in our camp. So this is just a process to bring awareness on our response plans for the job sites were in place, so everybody's familiar with the practices and where to go and where the muster points are. So this will all be similar in getting our community governments ready, having that dialogue, the regional office go to Tulita or Coville or Deline, and have these discussions here on emergency response plans and if it does happen, well, you're fully aware. So I just share that as a comment. Thank you there, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member for the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have one question for the Minister. Do all the communities that are outside of Yellowknife have a community siren to alert people in the community if there's an emergency? That's one way of doing it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The only time I heard those in Hay River was for a curfew. So the community's responsibility is to have these sirens, the air raid sirens. I'm not sure if we have a list of communities that have them or not, but it's something we can try to figure out with our other stats that we carry for communities and get back to the Member with that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member for the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. So this would be support and response to community governments in preparing for or responding to emergencies? So that would be one of their -- if they choose to do that and if communities choose to do that, that would be included in one of their budget items, would it? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** That's what I have for the questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yeah, it says here program management, it went down from -- well, this was because of the forest fire, responding to the forest fire and the flooding, for 2023-2024 from 166 to this current fiscal year 29,000 -- I mean \$29 million. Sorry about that, \$29 million. So I just wanted to ask the department how are they budgeting for the natural disaster, like, for this coming spring, summer?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to pass that to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

**MR. GARY BRENNAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so good question. The numbers do look odd here. But the way it works basically for emergency management for disasters is that once a disaster happens, we activate our disaster assistance policy, which is an executive council policy, and then we would go to the financial management board to seek appropriation for the amount of the damage that we think has happened. At that point in time, we'll be getting an appropriation.

So what we're seeing in the main estimates for 2024-2025 and the decrease, the 2024-2025 is the damage from the previous disasters that we've already had. And the funding for 2024-2025 is disasters -- so if something happens this year, it's not funded yet. It would happen after disaster happens. Thank you. B

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I was going to ask, too, I know last year, last summer, we brought forward Bill 98, an amendment to the Emergency Management Act. So I just wanted to ask the Minister if there's any update, or are there plan to update the disaster assistance policy?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a plan to review that policy once the afteraction review is completed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** At the last Assembly, there were six new positions that was approved, and it seems like the six new

position, it's all going to be in -- it's all in the headquarters, nothing in the regional. Is there any positions that's been allocated to the regions?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to pass this off to the director, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Last year we did re-profile positions in each of the regions to be emergency management coordinator positions in each of the regions last year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. With that in mind, is there any new position created in Tlicho region?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to pass this off to the director again.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, one of those positions is a coordinator position in Behchoko. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Well, thank you, that's good to know.

For the contract services, I know that, you know, there's a big difference from 2022-2023 to current. Well, last year there was \$100 million, so now it went down to \$29 million. Can they explain that to us, why this contract services is low? Did they -- so where are we spending more money? Because it doesn't seem like there's lots for the emergency management here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to ask the director to speak to this again. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding differences that are showing up in contract services is strictly related to the flood and wildfire budgets and the expenditures that we're seeing that and changes in that line item year over year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I would like to ask if all the contracts are paid up to date for the contract services?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister or the director.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** With that detail, Mr. Chair, the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the contracts are paid up to date. And I will also add that we have accrued quite a few funding amounts for this fiscal year to still be paid out once the work has been completed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I have no more further questions for this page. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? No further questions, please turn to page 356.

Municipal and Community Affairs, emergency management, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$29,902,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the public safety, beginning on page 358 with information items on page 361. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So in regard to the 9-1-1 program, can the Minister explain whether the 9-1-1 program is currently cost neutral or whether there are plans to make it a cost neutral program; i.e., the fees that go on phone bills will pay for the program itself?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The program is required to be cost neutral. So, yes, it is and will be cost neutral.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so it looks like the budget is increasing from last year's \$1.274 million to this year's \$1.527 million. Can the Minister explain what are the reasons for the increase in cost there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For that detail, I'm going to pass it off to the director, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason for the increase in costs is related to some staffing we are adding in to the 9-1-1 area to alleviate some of the costs we're seeing related to overtime. And because of the analysis that we had done, we had justified the need to add in more positions. One would be an emergency medical dispatcher's position as well as some relief positions. That is factored into the amount the Minister was alluding to earlier in terms of needing to increase our cost levy to make the program cost neutral.

We're also, in public safety, adding a position in the Office of the Fire Marshal for regulatory purposes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my first question is if it was determined that adding of the new positions would actually save money because it would lower -- is -- let me just first clarify. Is what I heard that it will -- the intent is to save money because we'll be paying less money in overtime? And if so, why do we see an increase in funding? Or is the intent to sort of make the human resources sort of more sustainable in the long term? Can the Minister just clarify whether we're saving money by adding these now positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you. And, again, for that detail, I'll pass it off to the director Jennifer.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize for not being clearer in the first part of the response. There is two things happening. One is we identified that because the legislation requires us to be cost neutral, our expenses were actually more than what we were budgeted, so we had to ask for some additional funding in this program area for 9-1-1. So it's twofold. One in terms of the additional expenses we have that we were not budgeted for, and also some savings in the staffing area, if you will, to flat line, so to speak, any -- to offset the additional costs we were having in overtime. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that clarification. So when will residents see an increase in the fees on their phone bill? And do we know what exactly that increase will be? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Again, I'll pass this off to director Young.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the director.

**MS. JENNIFER YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The fee increase, we anticipate, will be for April 1st, 2025. Sorry, I forgot the second part of the question. Oh sorry, yes, and the increase will be \$3. It currently is \$1.70. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's important people have the head's up and know what's coming there.

On another aspect of 9-1-1, I know there have been difficulties in terms of working out a collaboration with the city of Yellowknife that makes sure that resources overall are used most efficiently. Obviously, there's -- you know, there's a dispatch service that 9-1-1 provides, but the city of Yellowknife has always provided its own dispatch service. I wonder if the Minister can speak to whether those sort of disagreements and conflicts have been worked out with the city of Yellowknife and whether he thinks the system is now operating as efficiently as it can in Yellowknife to make sure we don't duplicate dispatch services. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like anything else new, there's always growing pains and that was no secret here. So there was a review done, and there was recommendations that were suggested. Those were implemented, and it's continually being worked on with the city of Yellowknife and the department to make sure that the review's been implemented and recommendations are followed through. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to Yellowknife North Member.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Final question here, is that review public? And can it be made public, if not? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, it's not a public document.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Was there any further -- okay. No further, I'm going to continue on now to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 360, you're looking at the ground ambulance highway rescue. I mentioned this in a while back I wanted an ambulance in my community, and I'm so pleased to see that it's on this books here. So where is this ambulance going? Thank you. This ground ambulance.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm kicking myself in the butt for bringing this up when I was a town council member in Hay River.

This funding here is to support services that are already being provided. It's not a funding per se. It's more or less to assist services that are already existing. And it's not a new ambulance service or new ambulance for anybody. Hate to be the bearer of bad news. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Okay, so it's not coming to my region? That's where I thought it was going to. Anyways, how do I go about getting an ambulance in my region for safety on the highway? Currently we don't have an ambulance in my community, and that was something that the residents had brought up to me. So how do I do that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently there's no legislation or anything behind ambulance services in the Northwest Territories, and right now it essentially resides with your municipalities to set up those types of services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Okay, that's good to know. Thank you so much. I don't have any further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? No further questions, please turn -- are we sure now? Thank you. No further questions, please turn to page 359.

Municipal and Community Affairs, public and safety, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$2,959,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to regional operations, beginning on page 362 with information items on 365. Are there any questions? No further questions -- oh sorry, I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Here, my questions to the Minister in this chapter or activity is landfills. A landfill in one of the communities that I represent is actually terrible. It's at the point where it's probably a fire liability with the amount of debris that have compiled over the years. And there was some efforts to recycle. And is there any willingness there from the department with the programs that are identified in this activity, or on regional operations, to have a vehicle compressor station to compress these old relics and get them cubilized so they can get shipped out of the community? And there's other objects there, old appliances, old vehicles, that sort of thing. But I just ask that one question to the cleaning of the landfill.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The community can do some of their own work on the landfill, obviously like any other community; however, like in my Minister's statement the other day, we have the hazardous waste project going on, which is collecting some of the hazardous waste and

compiling it and, at some point, hauling it out. So, yeah, I guess right now a lot of it lies with the community for the maintenance of the landfill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. I was more or less asking if there's any outside type services here. As the Minister knows, the NWTAC that represents all the municipalities is experiencing a gap, and this gap or a shortfall has been going on for several Assemblies. So is there any additional funding that would help these communities, in particular mobilize a compressor that would compress that's old vehicles from community to community, similar to what the government had years ago in the DOT days here. They had a crusher that went from community to the community and stockpiled crushed material. It was a government-owned piece of property and got circulated around. Is there something in the department or some funding to help purchase this compressor that could do the same thing, going from community to community, to compress these old relics and get them ready for shipment to a designated landfill or recycling depot down south? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I guess what this kind of lies into is the -- as in my Minister's statement, we were speaking of the funding that was out there for the five regions for collecting the hazardous waste and basically compiling it and getting it ready to ship out. So what I can do is we can get the department, we can find out what activities are being done in those regions in regards to what activities are currently being done for the cleanup of those things, like more detailed stuff, I guess, like the cars. So we'll get back to you on that. But right now it is being worked on through the hazardous waste cleanup. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member for the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's a good positive starting point. I thank the Minister for the reply. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? Thank you. Moving on to the regional operation beginning on pages -- oh, sorry. No further questions, please turn to page 363.

Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, operations expenditure summary,

2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$104,051,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to sports, recreation and youth, beginning on page 366 with information items on page 370. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 367.

Municipal and Community Affairs, sports, recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$8,459,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. There are additional information items on page 371 to 373. Are there any questions?

Pages 371 to 373, are there any questions? Thank you, Members. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, is this an activity of information item as identified on top, or is it an activity for approval? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you for clarification, it's just for information. Thank you.

Members, please return now to departmental summary found on page 335, with information items on page 336 to 338. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call the departmental summary.

Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditure summary, total department, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$156,327,000. Does the committee agree? Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

COMMITTEE MOTION 29-20(1):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 93-20(1): 2024-2025  
MAIN ESTIMATES – MUNICIPAL AND  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – DEFERRAL OF  
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,  
CARRIED

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the main estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.



**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? Show of hands or ayes. Show of hands. There we go. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Consideration of Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, total department, is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you to the Minister. Sat down already, that's quick. And thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Our sergeant already took those guys out of here; you guys are fast.

What is the wish of committee? Member for the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 93-20(1) and would like to report progress with three motions carried. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Can I have a seconder, please. Hay River South. All those in favour -- or no. The question -- or to the motion. You want to get out of here? All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? MACA budget's done, is that what I heard? Motion is passed.

---Carried

Reports of the Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 2:  
MISSING PERSONS ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik

Twin Lakes, that Bill 2, Missing Persons Act, be read for a third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recorded vote. Those all in favour, please rise.

### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Colleagues, 17 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. Motion has passed.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Monday, June 10th, 2024, 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 the 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 33-20(1): Municipal Funding Gap
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
  - Minister's Statement 4-20(1): 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season
  - Minister's Statement 5-20(1): Emergency Management Preparation
  - Minister's Statement 17-20(1): Reaching Average \$10 a Day Child Care in the NWT
  - Minister's Statement 24-20(1): Health Human Resources Recruitment and Retention
  - Tabled Document 93-20(1): 2024-2025 Main Estimates
  - Tabled Document 111-20(1): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Colleagues, I hope you have a good weekend. This House stands adjourned until Monday, June 10th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:50 p.m.