



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**1<sup>st</sup> Session**

**Day 24**

**20<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Monday, June 10, 2024**

Pages **919 - XX**

**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, June 10, 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, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson):** Colleagues, I'd like to thank Valerie Stefansson for the opening, for her guiding words.

Before we get in there, I see some special folks in the House there today. Eleanor Young, a friend, a colleague of mine. But now this is going to be the fun part. Mr. Dave Hurley is here today. I'd like to recognize this young man. I've known Mr. Hurley since 1983 so he looks as young as he did that day there, so I'd like to thank David. I'd like to thank Audrey. Kim, we all know Kim. And Tara, and Meagan. So thank you very much for being in the House today. I could tell more stories, but I will keep myself – I will behave myself today, right, Mr. Hurley?

Colleagues, Ministers' statements. Minister for ITI.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 51-20(1):  
MINERAL RESOURCES ACT  
REGULATIONS – PREPARING FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION**

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, developing regulations for the Mineral Resources Act is one of the key commitments from the Government of the Northwest Territories to support responsible resource development. This Act represents a new chapter for our mining sector, setting the stage for modernization and shared prosperity for residents, Indigenous governments, and our industry partners.

The Act and future regulation will increase opportunities for exploration by providing more time to explore claims before transitioning to leases and making it easier to collect high-quality geoscience data. This, in turn, will attract investment and support the highly-anticipated move to an online map staking system.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is working hard, in collaboration with Indigenous governments and stakeholders, to ensure that the regulations needed to implement the Mineral Resources Act are completed within the 20th Legislative Assembly. A comprehensive policy intentions document was completed at the end of 2023. The document captures the collaborative intent and rationale of the regulations that are being developed collaboratively and is guiding the legal drafting process.

Consensus has been reached with Indigenous governments and organizations participating in the regulation development process for almost all of the proposed policy concepts. The department is expecting an initial draft of the regulations toward the end of this year and in the first quarter of 2025, publicly sharing the proposed regulations for final engagement before they are circulated for Section 35 consultation.

Mr. Speaker, relationships will be foundational to the implementation of the Mineral Resources Act. Understanding this, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is working to ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand proposed changes and innovations, as well as the timelines for their implementation. Department officials meet regularly with representatives of the NWT's mining industry to address specific subjects or concerns and to ensure that all parties feel heard and see the full value of these regulations.

In May, the department met with NWT regulators to provide updates and advance collaborative discussions regarding the integration of the Mineral Resources Act into the broader regulatory framework. Officials also traveled to Lutselk'e to meet with elders, leaders, and residents to answer their questions and build understanding among Indigenous governments, stakeholders, and regulatory partners.

Mr. Speaker, the regulations that will bring the Mineral Resources Act into force are advancing under a protocol set out in the

Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management, a first for our territory. This work includes restructuring the department's mineral and petroleum resources branch for efficiency and supporting the new legislation with necessary software changes for greater transparency and accessibility.

An example of this leading industry approach is the proposed modernization of the socio-economic and impact-benefit agreements signed with diamond mines. These agreements have positioned the NWT as a leader in the social and environmentally-conscious management of mining in Canada.

Under the Mineral Resources Act, future benefit agreements can take various flexible forms, including participation, partnership, and equity agreements, all in the spirit of implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The time is right for these changes. There is a desire to chart a new way of doing business in the territory, bringing further clarity to industry and investors. This work is crucial as the territory moves towards a new era of mining amid a growing demand for critical minerals. I look forward to providing further updates on work to develop these regulations as we strive to take our territory's mining industry to new heights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Happy Mining Week.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister for ITI. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 52-20(1):  
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of our many partnerships, I rise today to applaud the work of Habitat for Humanity Northwest Territories. In the last 11 years, Habitat has built ten homes in the North. Habitat for Humanity staff and volunteers work hard to provide affordable homes for the Northwest Territories residents, and I am pleased with the continued partnership between Habitat and Housing NWT. Housing NWT has contributed over \$250,000 to Habitat for Humanity NWT. By working in partnership with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, it allows us to find ways to increase housing availability across our territory. I am always pleased when, through partnership, we can support our residents to reach their housing goals.

The week of May 13, 2024, key ceremonies were held at the two most recent builds in Hay

River and Yellowknife. As much as the families and houses deserve recognition, so do the volunteers behind them - Volunteers like Dave Hurley of Yellowknife.

Dave is the co-founder and former board chair of the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. On May 14, 2024, he won Habitat for Humanity Canada's Terry Petkau Legacy Award. The national award is the highest honour for Members of the organization. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a little about the legacy of Dave.

In 2010, Dave was concerned about the economic disparities preventing low to middle-income families from owning their own homes in the Northwest Territories. So, he helped co-found Habitat for Humanity NWT.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember Habitat houses are not free. They are for families who lack the money for a downpayment but are willing to provide the volunteer work and mortgage payments to get a roof over their heads. These are the people Dave is dedicated to helping, even in difficult times. When Habitat for Humanity NWT was at risk of losing its affiliate status, Dave worked tirelessly with the national office to develop solutions. He even recruited family and friends to sit on the board to ensure quorum was met so local operations could continue. Under Dave's leadership, Habitat for Humanity built the ten homes I mentioned earlier. They are in Dettah, Hay River and Yellowknife.

Dave is known among colleagues and friends as a strong project manager who takes a respectful, realistic, and culturally sensitive approach to building homes in the North. Those who know him describe him as a loyal, trustworthy, compassionate volunteer who loves the North as much as he loves his family and friends. It is not unusual to see him wiping a tear when welcoming parents and children to their new homes. For these reasons and more, he is known as the Heart of Habitat for Humanity NWT.

Congratulations, Dave Hurley, on receiving Habitat for Humanity's Terry Petkau Legacy Award. Housing NWT is proud of your many accomplishments, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Habitat for Humanity. uyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministers' Statements. Deputy Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 53-20(1):  
PREMIER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Hay River North, Premier, will be absent from the House for today and tomorrow to attend the Western Premiers' Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, madam deputy Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 271-20(1): MINING WEEK 2024

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The second week of June marks Mining Week, a time to celebrate the industry that has built the North as we know it and reflect on the hard work of the first pioneers and all who have come after them in maintaining and growing our engine of economic growth.

Mining Week is a proud tradition first proclaimed by Yellowknife Mayor McMahon in 1991. This year, the Nunavut and NWT Chamber of Mines will be holding the mine rescue competition on June 14th and 15th at the multiplex arena. They will also hold a miners' picnic on the 15th outside the multiplex from 12 to 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the mining industry is truly thousands of years old. People Indigenous to this land became experts in harnessing minerals long ago to create everything from nails, saws, knives and daggers, so they may craft, build, and hunt. After contact with Europeans, a boom of prospectors making their way farther north to stake claim to the source of minerals took place, bringing with them the first settlers to the North who set up communities the around these deposits establishing many of the communities we live in today. Almost a century after the first mines opened to the shores of Great Slave Lake, the industry has gone through many booms and busts and we've learned many lessons along the way. We've learned how necessary it is to respectfully partner with Indigenous nations so that the industries develop fairly to the benefit of all. We've also learned how important it is to shrink mining's ecological footprint so that Northerners can continue to enjoy a pristine natural environment.

Since the first Mining Week was proclaimed, many mines have come and gone but the crown jewel of our industry is our diamond mines. These mines have contributed \$23 billion to the NWT's economy since 1999 and have spent \$16 billion on procurement from NWT

businesses alone with over \$7 billion going to Indigenous owned businesses. Since 2015, the GNWT has collected an average of \$90 million from diamond mines annually and over 3,000 workers are employed in the mining sector overall.

This Mining Week, it's time to reflect on the closing of these mines and how we must pivot to the next chapter of our mining history. The land still boasts untapped mineral resources that are the demand of world markets, but it's up to this government to make new development a reality. Let's carry on the work of the pioneers who came before us. Let's get mining back on track for the North. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 272-20(1): CHIEF JIMMY BRUNEAU SCHOOL

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Chief Jimmy Bruneau residents.

Mr. Speaker, in 1970, the Rae Band Council formed and elected Rae-Edzo School Society to build and operate a new school called Chief Jimmy Bruneau School with a capacity of over 400 students. Chief Jimmy Bruneau School also included a 100-bed residence run by the school society for nonlocal Tlicho students. This residence housed Tlicho children from all of the outlying Tlicho communities as well as N'dilo and Dettah.

Around 1992, when Akaitcho Hall was in the process of closing down, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School became a regional high school where students from Gameti, Wekweeti, Whati, Dettah, and N'dilo were housed in the residence to complete their high school. Around 2004, the residence closed, but the children and youth still remained in Behchoko and moved to boarding homes.

Mr. Speaker, to this day students in Wekweeti who want to complete high school education must move to Behchoko, Whati, and Gameti, and home board with local families. Mr. Speaker, the Rae-Edzo School Society operated the school but it was still a federally funded residential school. My concern is that hundreds of children were housed in residence at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, yet these people are still not recognized as having had to attend residential school - a school that was designed and funded by the same department that funded residential school.

No students who were forced to attend Chief Jimmy Bruneau School have been eligible for any compensation for their experience at residential school. Mr. Speaker, hundreds of students were forced to leave their homes as young as six and seven years old. I myself remember being in grade 2 with classmates from Whati, Dettah, and N'dilo. These children were forced to leave their parents and safety of their family to attend school hundreds of kilometers away.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Monfwi, your time is up.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you. A school for many children only accessible by plane. This is a traumatic experience, and there is no recognition of the experience these survivors lived through. I will have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 273-20(1):  
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was going to do an acknowledgement for Dave Hurley today but being the selfless guy that he is, he asked that I instead highlight the important work Habitat for Humanity is doing in the NWT. So that is what I am speaking about today.

Habitat for Humanity Northwest Territories is a non-profit organization working toward a North where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Established in 2013, the NWT affiliate is one of the youngest in the country. Their mission is to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable homeownership for working northern families by providing a hand up, not a handout. It is not a free home, and homes are not given away. Applicants must be able to make affordable mortgage payments and contribute 500 volunteer hours working on their home or in the community. Habitat uses a shared equity mortgage model to lower the cost of homeownership and provide an opportunity to own a home to people who may not otherwise have that opportunity. Habitat staff support the homeowner and help prepare them for homeownership by providing training and resources on home maintenance, budgeting, and other support. Mortgage payments are set at 25 percent of household income, which

allows families to build equity and save for their family's future by lowering their monthly living costs.

In 2021, Habitat received CMHC funding to build ten family homes over five years. This funding was the turning point in their ability to provide affordable housing to NWT residents. The organization was able to hire staff and build at least two homes a year. Since 2021, Habitat has built seven homes in three NWT communities, providing seven families an incredible opportunity to become homeowners with affordable mortgage payments. Of all families who have become homeowners since 2013, 80 percent are Indigenous or Inuit and more than half are single parents. Families range in size from one to seven children. All were living in unsafe, unsuitable, and/or unaffordable housing before becoming Habitat homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, partnerships are crucial to Habitat's work. Habitat partnered with the city of Yellowknife, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the town of Hay River who donated building lots to the organization for their recent builds.

Housing NWT, Yellowknife's Elks Lodge, and many local contractors and businesses are also long-time financial supporters of Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Habitat for Humanity, and I am sure my colleagues will also for the great work they are doing in our communities. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 274-20(1):  
GRAVEL SOURCE NEAR TSIIGHTCHIC

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A gravel source is very important for many reasons. We need gravel for the upkeep of the highway, for the ferry landings, and for community use. With the high cost of fuel and transportation, it is important that we find a gravel source that is close to the community and readily available at a competitive price.

While Tsiighehtchic has that gravel source right in its backyard, extracting this source will benefit the community in many ways like training, employment, and this venture will help the economy of the NWT.



Mr. Speaker, today, if any community within the Beaufort Delta region requires top-grade gravel, they have to rely on a company from the town of Inuvik. With the high cost of fuel and transportation of the material from Inuvik to Tsiigehtchic, the cost of gravel will have increased substantially, and that extra cost is usually passed on to the customer.

Mr. Speaker, Cony Bay is located 20 kilometers away from the community of Tsiigehtchic, and a few years back the gravel source was tested and considered an excellent source to extract. This gravel source could also be used by the neighboring community of Fort McPherson at a competitive price compared to the community's present supplier. The Department of Infrastructure would definitely benefit from this venture because of the demand for top-grade gravel to keep the Dempster Highway in a safe driving condition should be a priority to the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, with the collaboration of other stakeholders, such as other government departments, local Indigenous governments and private industry, this venture would benefit the community, region, and territory through employment and training opportunities. These training opportunities will open other doors to employment within the community region, territory, and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, every community in the Northwest Territories has something that contributes to the economy. Our involvement as a government is vital in making these and other ventures a reality in enhancing the economy of the NWT. The community of Tsiigehtchic and the Government of the Northwest Territories should act on this venture as soon as possible. The solution to top-grade gravel, employment, and training opportunities are waiting at the door of Tsiigehtchic. Let's open the doors to opportunity for the community, region, and the rest of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Good timing, Member for Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 275-20(1):  
INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR N'DILO

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, Yellowknives Dene First Nation has lived on these shores of Great Slave Lake since time immemorial, part of whom make up the presentday community of N'dilo on Latham Island. While they find themselves in the municipal boundary of Yellowknife, the community which has only existed before less than a century, N'dilo is separated in the community with distinct

people. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories evidently does not agree. I say that they do not agree because the people of N'dilo are officially treated as residents of Yellowknife. We just have to look at how the community of public infrastructure format is calculated.

The calculation which dictates how much per capita funding is allocated to the communities. The population of N'dilo's grouped in Yellowknife instead of being included in with Dettah. Therefore, N'dilo is subsidizing services in Yellowknife leaving Dettah on the hook for the funds needed to maintain services for their fellow YKDFN members in N'dilo.

Yes, Yellowknife and N'dilo have a close relationship, but it is inappropriate for the people of N'dilo to be forced to rely on the municipal services of a different community. N'dilo is unique and needs and has a distinct government separate from the city of Yellowknife. So this situation is also inefficient as well as unfair to the people of N'dilo.

The leadership is looking for services such as a new water treatment facility, new band office, new gymnasium, upgraded community freezers, etcetera. They should have asked Yellowknife to share the funds for these projects or be told that they can provide them with these services instead.

These two separate entities deserve two separate pots of money. However, there's a lot of agreement between N'dilo and Yellowknife as well, as leaders of both communities understand they must work together for the benefit of the region. Expanding a municipal boundary to have more lands for housing and other services is a good example. There has been a great deal of collaboration between the city of Yellowknife and YKDFN to make this happen, but we have not seen any progress coming from the GNWT despite years of work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen our relationship between N'dilo and the city of Yellowknife so that YKDFN members are respected in their community and supported. I hope to get some clarity on this issue today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 276-20(1):  
IMPACTS ON BUSINESSES OF  
CANCELLED MARINE TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES SEASON

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cancelled barging 2024 season impacts to the Sahtu businesses. On May the 23rd, the Government of the Northwest Territories announced that due to the low water levels, there would be no barging between Hay River, Tulita, and Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, while the Government of the Northwest Territories cannot change the low water levels throughout the Mackenzie basin, we can change how we respond to the impacted businesses. Making businesses wait 6 to 12 months to ship supplies is not an option as they can't go without work during the construction season and still maintain staff, cash flow, and pay operating expenses. Several companies already have laid off staff and fear they may never return.

Mr. Speaker, businesses in the Sahtu estimate over \$14 million in lost revenues, \$500,000 in added shipping costs, and potentially millions more in future losses. Several millions in losses will also be felt throughout reduced indirect spending at accommodations, groceries, restaurants. Mr. Speaker, our region's disposal economy is terrible and gone.

Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu people are resilient, but they also cannot weather the storm alone. Businesses are facing challenges dealing with MTS staff, with virtually no support to assist them as they scramble to make other arrangements. Many feel disrespected, dismissed, with one business quoting as saying it's bordering impossible to do business in the Sahtu region.

Mr. Speaker, the shocking low water levels have dealt a severe blow to our local and regional businesses and the entire Sahtu economy. Without extra support provided at this time, there will be dire consequences. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 277-20(1):  
REDUNDANCY LINE FOR MACKENZIE  
VALLEY FIBRE OPTIC LINE

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you've heard me speak in this House regarding the Inuvik satellite station facility, an important piece of the economy viability in Inuvik and certainly, Mr. Speaker, was the anchor tenant for the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line, which I appreciate this previous government had completed. Mr. Speaker, now there's a redundancy line being built through

the Dempster Highway and through Whitehorse and over through Fort Nelson as well to ensure that we do have a redundancy loop for any breakages or any lapses in that line that's important to this facility.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Whitehorse-Dawson portion has been paid for by the federal government but, Mr. Speaker, half the redundancy issues are between McGill Lake and High Level. So, Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't we, I guess, as a government look to go through Fort St. John and beyond for this link to ensure that, again, we keep uninterrupted service for this important facility in Inuvik and of course the residents along the way as well. We do need that redundancy beyond Fort Nelson, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question would be, I guess, for the appropriate Minister at the time, is to why we are relying on McGill Lake as the primary redundancy link, Mr. Speaker, and why aren't we looking at filling that void all the way down beyond that to Fort St. John and beyond? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Member from Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 278-20(1):  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR  
TRADITIONAL CABIN OWNERS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another impact facing many residents in my riding and other ridings is the debris and waste created from the wildfires. There are many cabins spread throughout the Deh Cho. These are traditional cabins used for hunting, fishing, and recreational purposes. Some of these cabins were destroyed by wildfire, and the owners are searching for any supports available to them. Cleaning up sites that are completely charred, remove all the debris, or trying to renovate buildings with fire damage is not an easy task.

Municipal and Community Affairs provides support to clean up residential sites in community boundaries, but the support is not provided to business or cabin owners. The GNWT has disaster financial assistance and disaster compensation for hunters and trappers. Is there assistance or consideration for damage to cabins in these funding programs? Hunting and fishing is a part of our Dene way of life and it's a part of who we are, so having a cabin on the land is like an extension to our homes. Is there any coordination logistical or financial support that can be provided? I will have questions for the Minister of ECC later, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 279-20(1):  
EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, equitable access to health care is in the front of minds of all Northerners as we look to our families, and we always want the best for them. This includes specialized support services, such as specialists to get testing and treatment, Mr. Speaker. We all know delays cost lives, they cost money, they create frustration and inefficiencies, and this trouble Northerners far and wide. So whether you're in the Mackenzie Delta or you're in the Sahtu, Mr. Speaker, people get frustrated.

For example, delays in specialized services because your government chooses to send our team of experts, our specialized health care professionals to Nunavut, instead of putting our Northerners, our own citizens, to work. What does this do? It causes burnout in our health care system, our caregivers, delays getting care if you're a Northerner, and the catch-up just never seems to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I have to get frustrated as I shake my head and I see that why do we send people from Yellowknife to Edmonton practically daily for rheumatoid arthritis treatment? Does that make fiscal sense? What about the craziness and frustration people feel when they hear that folks have to travel from the Delta for diabetes treatment regularly, or dental treatment? The numbers just don't make sense, Mr. Speaker, when you see hundreds of people annually travelling down when we can do business much smarter.

Money doesn't grow on trees, but in the theme of Mining Week, Mr. Speaker, it can be found in the ground. But efficiencies pile up. Addressing the latter two matters, Mr. Speaker, is very important to resolve funding issues because those two alone would help us fund extended health care benefits. It's not innovation, Mr. Speaker. It's common sense.

Mr. Speaker, with current budget of around \$650 million, there's opportunities abound. Maybe the department should consider instead of hiring more and dozens and hundreds of employees, be it on the books, off the books, funded, unfunded, agencies, casuals, etcetera, they just hire one efficiency expert to ask the question, why are we doing things this way? Can't we do them better? Differently? Doesn't it make sense to reflect once in a while why we do things?

Mr. Speaker, I raise this point because there's so many opportunities before us. The other day I was reading online, it said people won't support change if they're not confident in their abilities to adapt. So people are threatened by the shortcomings, real or imagined, and then they protect themselves by resisting to change. It comes down to fear of failure and knowledge and inability. Mr. Speaker, I say this, as I finish, dear, health department, I believe in you, you can do it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 280-20(1):  
SPORT NORTH AWARDS

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, on May 24th and 25, Sport North held its Annual General Meeting and their annual Sport North Awards Banquet on the last day of the meetings. I can tell you; I was invited to attend the Banquet as a guest of one of the award winners. I can say the evening event was a huge success. The banquet brought together athletes, coaches, volunteers, and supporters from across the Northwest Territories to celebrate the remarkable achievements in sport over the past year. The awards play a valuable role in supporting athlete success and recognizing the NWT's growing talent.

Upon getting there, I realized that there were several friends that were receiving awards that event.

Janie Hobart received the Delma Kisoun Memorial Community Contributor Award.

Janie was nominated by NWT Curling. I have known her and worked with her over the years. She was and still is committed to the development of sport and recreation for the NWT. With the Mackenzie Recreation Association, she spearheaded the annual Lawrie Hobart Memorial Volleyball Tournament which is hosted in Fort Smith. The scariest thing is when Janie comes to you and says she has an idea, because nine out of ten times you'll ended up doing it regardless.

Shari Olsen received the Dennis Crane Memorial Official of the Year Award. She was nominated by Table Tennis North.

Like some of you here, I have known Shari for a long time. As fellow athletes in softball, we got together at various events throughout the years. At the Arctic Winter Games, I ran into her and asked her what she was doing there, and she said she was officiating. I assumed it was for figure skating, but I was wrong. It was for table tennis. When I asked her why, her response was I wanted a new challenge and

officiating table tennis was this. She spoke about the sport and what it brought out of her.

Rowe's Construction received the Corporate Contributor of the Year where they were nominated by Table Tennis North.

This company has offices in Hay River and Fort Simpson. The amazing thing about this company, they have been and always been about giving back to the communities including places where their company do not have staff. I can tell you they have been responsible for helping building ball fields, golf courses, referees and changing rooms, sponsoring teams, events and fundraising activities.

Jaicee Tsetso was one of the Members of the Team of the Year - Arctic Winter Games female basketball team. This team went undefeated throughout the whole tournament and winning the first gold medal, beating the powerful team of Alaska in the final game - the first time in 50 years.

Colleagues, I have included three of the award winners' nominations in my speech today however reflecting of the time, I will deemed it as read.

In closing I would like to echo Bill Othmer, the executive director of Sport North's final words: The awards banquet is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our territorial sport organizations. Each recipient has shown exceptional commitment and passion, and it is a privilege to recognize their achievements. We are inspired by their stories and motivated to continue supporting their journeys.

Congratulations to all the award winners. They are well deserved.

(Deemed Read)

### **Janie Hobart**

Janie has been a part of the NWTCA Board, and/or the Fort Smith Curling Club Board as the liaison to the NWTCA since the mid-1980s. She has held every role of the NWTCA, including President, and has been the Competitions director for several years.

Janie has been officiating with NWT Curling at the local and Territorial levels for over 25 years. This year alone just officiated multiple NWTCA Championships, the Senior Nati, AWG in Alaska, as well as the U21 in Alberta. Janie travels to NWT communities to facilitate Officials trainings.

Janie has officiated at almost every level of national championships as well as Men's

Worlds and Junior Worlds Janie was a timer at the Olympics and Para-Olympics in Vancouver.

She is on the board of the Mackenzie Rec Board.

At the 2016 National Masters Curling Championship in Nova Scotia, Janie was selected by her peers for the Female Sportsmanship Award.

### **Shari Olsen**

Shari has dedicated the past five years to officiating with Table Tennis North, showcasing her passion and expertise in the sport. From the NWT School Championships to prestigious events like the 2020, 2023, and 2024 Arctic Winter Games, as well as the 2019 and 2023 Canada Winter Games, Shari has been a consistent and reliable Territorial Umpire. This exciting opportunity marks a new chapter in Shari's officiating career, as she eagerly anticipates the challenges and growth that come with reaching the national level. Her dedication and commitment to the sport are evident, and her future as a national Umpire looks promising.

Shari is a dedicated and enthusiastic Territorial Umpire in the Northwest Territories, always eager to enhance her skills and knowledge in the field. She seizes every learning opportunity that comes her way, demonstrating a strong commitment to personal growth and professional development. Shari's willingness to lend a helping hand and support her less experienced colleagues showcases her exceptional leadership qualities and dedication to the sport. With her passion for mentoring and guiding others, we are excited about the prospect of Shari becoming a Referee in the near future, as she continues to inspire and empower officials in the Territory.

Shari is a true role model in every sense of the word. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that everyone around her has everything they need to excel in their official duties. Leading by example, Shari embodies professionalism in all aspects of her work. Her dedication to learning and teaching is unwavering, as she believes in the power of knowledge sharing and continuous growth. Shari's commitment to excellence serves as an inspiration to those around her, making her a respected and admired figure in her field.

Shari is a dedicated individual who is deeply involved in various sports, with Table Tennis being just one of her many passions. She is known for her strong sense of community and commitment to her territory, always striving to ensure that everyone around her has the chance to excel and reach their full potential.

Shari's inclusive and supportive nature creates a welcoming environment where individuals can thrive and grow, making her a true champion of empowerment and opportunity for all.

### Rowe's Construction

Rowe's Construction has been a pillar of support for the North, particularly in the realm of Table Tennis. Their contributions have been invaluable, from offering transportation services to various communities to storing and distributing equipment for the sport. Their unwavering assistance before, during, and after events has been a source of great comfort and reliability. Rowe's Construction embodies a positive and supportive attitude, always viewing challenges as opportunities and possibilities. Their dedication to the growth and success of Table Tennis in the North is truly commendable.

Table Tennis North will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2024, and throughout the years, Rowe's Construction has been a steadfast supporter of our organization. Their unwavering commitment to our cause has been instrumental in our growth and success. We are just one of the many organizations and events that have benefited from Rowe's Construction's generosity. From local community events to Territorial competitions and beyond, Rowe's Construction has consistently demonstrated their dedication to supporting and uplifting the community. We are grateful for their continued partnership and look forward to many more years of collaboration.

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

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5-20(1):  
CHIEF T'SELEHYE HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATES

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community of Fort Good Hope is proud to celebrate two graduates from the Chief T'Selehye School this year. We'd like to congratulate Jermaine Tobac and Dyer Gardebois on their achievement. The whole community wants to celebrate in their success and wish them the best in their education journey as they take their next steps. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member from Range Lake asked unanimous consent to return to item number 7, oral questions. Any nays? Seeing no nays, we'll go back to oral questions. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake?

### Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 271-20(1):  
MINERAL RESOURCES STRATEGY  
DEVELOPMENT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2014, the Government of the Northwest Territories released its mineral development strategy. It's a document -- this document was a result of broad engagement with industry, Indigenous governments, and other stakeholders and moved the industry forward by creating incentives to keep explorers exploring, evolving its legislation, mapping more geology, including more ways for Indigenous participation in the industry, and creating a strong local workforce. We haven't had an update to this in some time. Can the Minister speak to what the department is doing to build on the success of this strategy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of ITI.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not to go on for too long, but I would say that we are working on this strategy every single day. We are supporting currently 42 exploration projects within the territory. We have Pathfinders, a fabulous team of Pathfinders that work every day to make sure that people are connected. We are ensuring that we are including Indigenous governments when those that need funding sources, if they want to join the GNWT at places like PDAC and Roundup, and making sure that we're bringing people together. When it comes to education, we're in the process of transitioning to the BC curriculum which is a driver of innovation through project-based learning for students across the territory. So I'd say this is something that we are working on collectively right from our students to our workforce that exists today and encouraging investment and continuation in this great sector. I think it's also worth noting that this year we are expected to increase exploration expenditures in the Northwest Territories by 27 percent. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's good news. And I know the Minister knows that mining matters, and it's great to see it move beyond just the mines and actually to other areas of public policy.

Mr. Speaker, the mining incentive program was a big part of the success of the strategy, continues to be successful. Can the Minister tell us if the increase in investment is due to that fund? thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course I couldn't speak directly to the correlation, but what I can say is every year while the mineral incentive policy is fully subscribed that not every year are all of those dollars spent. Sometimes at the end of the year companies have to give those dollars back because they weren't able to spend them how they originally anticipated. But I would say the best thing that we can do to continue to increase exploration in the territory is continue to have good conversation like this, continue to make sure that we are participating in events like Roundup, like PDAC, and continue to make sure that we have supporting all partners at the table and bringing everyone together. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a bunch of regulatory improvements that would greatly help the industry. I know the Minister has spoken about this before in her Minister's statement. But apart from the mining Mineral Resources Act, how is she working with her colleague, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, to streamline environmental regulations so we can get these projects moving quicker towards the larger regulatory stage? Get exploration projects moving quicker. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, luckily on this -- well, on both sides of the House, we have great working relationships, and that doesn't stop between myself and the Minister of ECC. We're able to come together, and we're working hard to better understand what the other -- what one another is looking for, where each of our departments is at, and what industry is looking for. So we are meeting on a regular basis to work through some of that. What I will also say, Mr. Speaker, is this is work that's not only being done within, you know, the confines of meeting rooms within the GNWT but that industry itself is also looking for ways to streamline processes between the GNWT and the federal government as well and is doing their part to make sure that we're all working together as well. And so I think that over the course of this term, we'll see some really creative things

happen as far as industry is concerned in being able to move forward. Also worth noting here, Mr. Speaker, is there's also the Mackenzie operational dialogues that feed right into the work that myself and the Minister of ECC are doing so that there are industry and government tables that exist for this work that we're able to tap into as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. As I said in my Member's statement, it's Mining Week. So what is the Minister doing to celebrate Mining Week? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than happy to commit to the Member to sharing the schedule of Mining Week on my Facebook page to ensure that people have access to it. But there's everything from virtual events so that people can participate across the territory. There's also rock walks happening so people can get out and hold some cool rocks, and believe me, there's a ton of them out there. There are also site tours for lift and lithium, which is a pretty big deal in the North Slave region at the moment and one we definitely want to make sure that people have the opportunity to ask about. And, of course, there's even colouring books for our youngest residents to be able to get involved in Mining Week. And of course, at the end of the week, there is on Saturday here in Yellowknife, a barbecue at the miners' picnic, and that is something that is put on by -- where industry all comes together, and I will be out there flipping burgers and I hope to see as many Yellowknifers and people from the surrounding region out there as possible. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 272-20(1):  
REDUNDANCY LINE FOR MACKENZIE  
VALLEY FIBRE OPTIC LINE

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure or Finance, I'm not sure. It's the same person, so she'll figure it out I'm sure.

On the fibre line, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to, can the Minister tell me if there has been any consideration given to the redundancy beyond Fort Nelson and is it too late, I guess, to relook at that agreement between the GNWT, Yukon government, and NorthwesTel. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an overall good news story here, so I appreciate the questions. I know there are residents and businesses in Inuvik who are really leading the charge in terms of what's happening in our advanced technology industry here in the Northwest Territories, with the satellite array and providing servicing to them. The agreement we have the Yukon ensures that their traffic can use the Mackenzie Valley fibre line in case of need and that our traffic could use the line that comes down the -- or in case of need. I think there is some additional work that's going to happen to increase the redundancy. Now, it may not be under that contract exactly, but I'll take the Member's point on this and make sure that we are continuing to engage with industry to provide them the best services we can. Thank you.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. Certainly, that portion of the redundancy is very important to the businesses and the satellite station facility as the Minister alluded to. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I guess, who is the owner of the fibre line once it's complete, the redundancy line?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik branch of the line, I would have to confirm. I believe it would be NorthwesTel that continues to maintain ownership of that line. By contrast, of course, we have a P3 partnership on our end on the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line. Thank you.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I ask that question, of course, because it's my understanding that the federal funding was provided for the Whitehorse to Dawson portion of that line. I'm wondering if that line, then, would be owned by NorthwesTel.

Mr. Speaker, one final question, part of this proposal obviously was having redundancy and fibre into the community of Tuktoyaktuk too along the new Inuvik to Tuk highway. Can the Minister speak to the ongoing work on getting that line in as well? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this project makes good on a promise dating back sometime to when the original Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line was under consideration and under development. That work is advancing and, in fact, is advancing this summer. We did have an opportunity that we were happy to make use of where the folks that were doing the work on the Yukon portion of the line are already mobilized,

which will reduce costs for us by utilizing them and utilizing that opportunity to complete that section of fibre up to Tuktoyaktuk, and having had some significant engagement and some support from the IRC in the region, it's their lands ultimately, as I say, that project, my understanding, is that it's underway for this construction season and will be completed, if not this year, then within the next few construction seasons. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 273-20(1):

#### INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR N'DILO

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1970, the city of Yellowknife was created, and they drew municipal boundaries around the city of Yellowknife, and that included the community of N'dilo. When they did that, there was no consultation or accommodation with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and they did it without their consent. My question is to the MACA Minister. Can the Minister update this Assembly on any progress regarding changes to the Yellowknife municipal boundary with Yellowknives Dene First Nation? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The city of Yellowknife and Yellowknives Dene First Nation jointly submitted a boundary change request under the Executive Council Community Boundaries Policy. In December 2022, MACA requested additional information from the city regarding the proposed boundary line and its impact on adjacent land and improvements. The city provided its response in December 2023.

During the December 2022 meeting between DKFN and the city and MACA, a DKFN representative indicated that they were reviewing their land withdrawal areas and considering changes that might impact the proposed boundary lines. When MACA then requested that the city and DKFN reengage with each other to discuss proposed boundaries and identify any further revisions before approval process proceeds, both parties were advised to follow up with MACA whether they would be proceeding with the boundary lines that they'd proposed, and the department is still waiting for a follow-up on that meeting. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even though the boundaries were drawn, there was no consent from YKDFN, but the GNWT continued to recognize N'dilo as part of the city of Yellowknife. Will the Minister commit to funding N'dilo as a separate entity distinct from Yellowknife going forward? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, we are currently funding 32 communities in the Northwest Territories and at this time, until these meetings are held and discussions are agreed to, we will stick to our current policy. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you. I know the territorial government was born in 1967, over 55 years now, but the thing is that, you know, it's concerning that the GNWT accepted the municipal boundary of Yellowknife. But going forward, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to compensating N'dilo retroactively for lost funding dollars that they have been going to the city of Yellowknife without their consent? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the Member is aware, but the funding that the government gets is federal funding that we receive, and those pots are allocated through the formula funding that we have that go through all the communities. So we would not be able to retroactively commit to providing funds retroactively for the community. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** So what I'm hearing is that Dettah will continue to subsidize N'dilo while N'dilo provides funding to the city of Yellowknife. Can the Minister provide a timeline for when this work on administratively separating N'dilo from the city of Yellowknife, when would that occur? That we here, we could get the funding we need to subsidize our own business in the community. Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to discuss a timeline, the DCFN would have to make the separate submission on behalf of the residents of N'dilo to be considered a separate community government once boundary issues have been resolved with the city of Yellowknife. If a newer community is formed, MACA's current community funding budget would be reallocated amongst 33 communities rather than 32. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Oral questions. Member from YK Centre.

QUESTION 274-20(1):  
PUBLIC FUNDING EFFICIENCY IN  
HEALTHCARE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. With the budget in the range of \$650 million with hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of employees on the books both funded, unfunded, etcetera, Mr. Speaker, what does the department have in terms of jobs specifically that are targeted to analyze spending of the department in the context of an efficiency expert? 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, within the department, we have the ADM of finance, policy and planning. Within NTHSSA, they have their own finance. And within the NTHSSA, there's also a sustainability unit that has been working through the NTHSSA reviewing all of the programs under the government renewal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With two CFOs, dozens of managers, directors, even bookkeepers for goodness sakes I'm sure, it's not a policy issue. It's a numbers issue. Why doesn't the department look at hiring someone specific to identify efficiencies with respect to costs? If health is so expensive, you'd be thinking health would be leading the charge to find the most efficient way to do things. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe in the department of health. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe in the department of health as well and all of the associations. And I know that, you know, given the Member, you know, highlighting the amount that it costs to run health and social services in all 33 communities, it is a high cost. The Member also stated that there are a lot of unfunded positions. A lot of those unfunded positions are third party funded positions which we get a lot of federal money for. Those positions -- and then there's -- because we have such a high number of workforce within, we have one-third of the employees as well. We do not, however, have one-third of all of the senior management of the government. So, you know, when you take in the size of the organization versus the senior management versus the staff that are unfunded, we also have



a large population of our staff that are away for, you know, maternity leave, sick leave, education leave, so those also have to be backfilled because those positions are not -- you can't just leave those positions unfunded. So within the department, there is a lot of work going on within measuring all of our programs. However, a lot of our programs that are core, and then there's a lot of programs that we as NWT also support so that there's services. And those are the tough ones. Those are the tough ones. The core funding ones that we get core funding, it's all of the ones that are not core funded that we struggle to be able to maintain that stability, the sustainability. And so those are the things that you'll hear, and that's a lot of those discussions go on in this -- the floor of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, again, speaking on the theme of being not confident to do change, Mr. Speaker, I believe in the department, Mr. Speaker. I know they have the skills, Mr. Speaker. And I hope the Minister wasn't suggesting she's going to hire more ADMs, DMs, and who knows what else.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister have the confidence that I'm giving her -- would she take the leadership I'm encouraging her to take to hire someone from an auditor general point of view to do value for money audit on the work we do there in the department because of the inefficiencies of how the programs are currently being run, such as the example I talked about earlier today? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know when we hear inefficiency, you know, in our public service staff, especially in Health and Social Services, are run off, you know, their feet, then we say there's inefficiencies is -- you know, they're doing multiple jobs and they're providing frontline service. And I hear the Member, and I understand where he's coming from. That is why the Minister of health and I have had active conversations on where we are financially and, again, where those core programs are, where those noncore funded that we are funding from within that we're providing to the residents of the Northwest Territories, and are those sustainable with our fiscal picture. However, Mr. Speaker, for so long, you know -- and this is the thing is when I think of my computer that just updated, our health and social services authority, all the authorities, you know, every single year there's increased growth, costs, all these things, but not everything can make it through forced growth at the budget table. And so we have to prioritize. And then sometimes things get bounced back until then they become urgent and then they get pushed forward. So there's only so much money in the budget that

we can do that. And so that is an ongoing battle. That is an ongoing -- not battle, but it is a battle within Health and Social Services as what we bring forward for forced growth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister of health said she has conversations with the Minister of health, I hope she wasn't having an out of body experience. And that's meant as a joke, Mr. Speaker, okay, in the nicest way. Because I believe in the health Minister. As a matter of fact, I know the health Minister has the ability and knowledge, rah, rah, rah, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't talk about any of that stuff about people running around. I'm talking about being efficient with our money, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about value for money. Instead of sending people daily to Edmonton for rheumatoid arthritis, examine the business case of saying bring someone here. I'm not going to go through the rest of the examples; I've already made them, Mr. Speaker. I'm strictly speaking about value for money.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of health, again, is what about hiring some type of auditor who could examine the way we do businesses program by program to find more efficiencies within it, and then our staff won't be running their feet off. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, and that was where this health sustainability unit came into play, and that was the expectation of that, and now that they've completed one part of it, that is the discussion that I'm having with the Minister of Finance, not the Minister of health, and does that department need to -- you know, is it continuing the way it's going to continue or does it need to do something else now. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Colleagues, we would like to focus our questions and our answers a little bit more concise, please, so we can get through the process.

Members' statements. Member from Sahtu.

QUESTION 275-20(1):  
IMPACTS ON BUSINESSES OF  
CANCELLED MARINE TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES SEASON

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Infrastructure to my statement earlier. After MTS barge cancellations in 2018 and 2022, the GNWT organized an airlift for affected communities. My first question there, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister looked into this option for the Sahtu region? Mahsi.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you it was just under \$2 million for the airlift up into the high Arctic communities. The situation was a little bit different in terms of timing, in terms of where we were at in the season, and mitigation measures that we were attempting to put into place. That was the situation where it was quite late in the season, and there was very little ability for anyone to mitigate. Conversely, in this situation, what we have the opportunity to do, myself and Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment, and our teams, is to work directly with the communities identify where, in fact, people were not able to mitigate, where the various businesses were not able to mitigate. I know those meetings have taken place with officials already as of last week to identify where the needs are going to be, who was or was not able to otherwise manage their cargo, given the notices that we were sending out early, and with that information we'll be able to come up with a response that is appropriately dealing with the situation at hand and not necessarily relying only on what would have happened a few years ago, but being responsive to the realities on the ground in the Sahtu. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that information. My next question, can the Minister commit her department to organize an airlift at pay-for-service-fee to the Sahtu for 2024 season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is exactly part of the conversation that's being had with officials, again both in ITI and Infrastructure right now, and the purpose of the conversation is to sort out what businesses, what entities had the opportunity to take on insurance. I know MTS was pushing the importance of having insurance to help support in the event that there was a low water level and a reduction in barge service being unfortunately the situation of having now no barge service. You know, who had that opportunity, who maybe made choices not to take on the opportunity, what impacts are there to residents who might be, you know, once removed from the parties who were, in

fact, they were relying on. So sorting some of that out, we want to ensure that if there's going to be subsidies using public dollars, that we're doing that in a way that actually identifies need and that actually is appropriate and equitable to those who, in fact, need it as compared to others who might not need it or who have made choices as a result of the situation. So, again, it's not a no, Mr. Speaker. It's a question of wanting to ensure that we put public dollars in a way that actually supports those who are going to need it. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that information. Moving on, I'm glad to hear that this Minister is making comments or statements to the previous Minister on Friday that we're taking an all-of-government approach. It really is a collective one to address this issue, and a major one. Can the Minister provide a subsidy to ensure the air cargo rate does not exceed above 60 cents per pound as proposed by the air barge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, I appreciate the Member's being not only a strong advocate but has actually been an important liaison for information and coordination on this issue going back as early as the winter when we were dealing with winter resupply.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few different things going on. For one, Norman Wells does not have the same fuel resources or (audio) sources. They are supplied by the private sector. Whereas, Deline and Tulita are supplied through the fuel services division of the Department of Infrastructure. There's private sector usage, private sector businesses, and then residents who might be relying on them.

So I am conscious, and I know my colleague is as well of the urgency of the matter. We just want to make sure that if we're going to use public dollars that we're doing that in a way that actually responds to the needs of residents and businesses who are unable to mitigate, who don't have any other alternatives, and who, in fact, have the need. I can say there are sufficient fuel levels in the communities that are resupplied by fuel services division that will get through to the winter resupply. And so, again, we want to make sure that if we're using public dollars, we're putting them to the places where they are, in fact, needed now. Thank you.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my last question, the ultimate

solution for all this, as we previously mentioned and we all agree, is our all-season road. But in the meantime, we got to stay alive.

My last question here, can the Minister implement a fuel subsidy to mitigate the high costs of diesel and jet fuel in the Sahtu communities? Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I didn't mean to get ahead of myself, or perhaps ahead of the Member, but there are different fuel service circumstances pertaining to different communities in the Sahtu obviously. Deline and Tulita, as I said, those right now are being supplied through fuel services division of the Department of Infrastructure. Norman Wells is coordinated by the private sector. So Imperial Oil, I can say early on we're wanting to put them on alert and notice that we had some concerns around the water levels. I'm not sure what strategies they may or may not be employing. Obviously, Imperial Oil has fairly significant resources available to it in order to supply their customers whereas fuel services division on this winter resupply did take an effort to ensure we had sufficient supplies to the winter road knowing that we were likely facing a low water season even without the situation we are in now. So if, in fact, the fuel subsidy is what's going to be the best way to support residents and businesses or whether some other sorts of rate subsidy or some other sort of cargo subsidy, that is an active conversation between both our departments and the regional governments and regional businesses. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 276-20(1):  
GRAVEL SOURCE NEAR TSIIGEHTCHIC

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. The competition for gravel and other resources is good for the consumer. Will the Department of Infrastructure look at options to get at this gravel within Tsiigehtchic for the benefit of the region and especially for the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I would suggest is I can work with MACA to determine if this is a community government need or ECE if this is, in fact, a land resource or permitting need to help identify what, in fact, it is that might

be holding up the community of Tsiigehtchic from being able to apply or seek opportunity to access gravel resources. So I'll certainly commit to go and work with my colleagues through Infrastructure and through their offices, figure out where the barriers or bottlenecks might be, and work then directly with the community to see if they can move themselves forward on what they need. Thank you.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are other benefits getting at and using this specific gravel source for training opportunities, for the Dempster Highway, and also the local economy. Will the Minister look at other stakeholders and try to make this venture a reality for the benefit of the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I bring in two more departments to my last answer of ECC or ECE and ITI, perhaps the commitment I ought to be making is to have an opportunity to sit down with the community of Tsiigehtchic and identify again exactly where it is or what it is that they are not accessing and they're having difficulty accessing. I had checked in with the department after hearing the Member's statement, and we have access to provide gravel for what is required from our end, but there's obviously a disconnect in what they need. So perhaps the commitment is to sit down with them and see what they need and then see who from the Government of the Northwest Territories can help fulfill that. Thank you.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You beat me to my third question there. Will the Minister consider talking to the local government if their request came directly from the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

(audio).

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister consider joining the Ministers' tour of the Mackenzie Delta on July 16th and 17th and get back to me with a response as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I happen to know the answer to this because when the Minister beside me agreed to go on the tour, she handed off an obligation to me on that particular week. So for her to go there, I'm going somewhere else. But let's -- I commit to finding a date as soon as possible hopefully in the next six weeks or eight weeks where I can also head on my own up to the region. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 277-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES CHILD AND WELFARE  
SERVICES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had question for Premier, but he's not here. So I will wait until tomorrow. But I will ask Health and Social Services questions regarding child welfare system.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We do not recognize people are not in the House. We just go that way. So just for future, please don't recognize if somebody's not in the House. Thank you, Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Mr. Speaker, the child welfare system in the NWT has 98 percent of children in care. How many of those children became a permanent ward of the state? How many of those children were adopted while in foster care? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister of Health and Social Services, I think you got two in there.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the level of detail that the Member is asking. But what I would like to provide the Member is that knowing that we have a large number of children in care and, you know, and we did a lot of work on child and family services in the last government, and as I was part of that work as Regular Members, one of the things that I don't think a lot of us from that time walked away from was knowing where the children were. So I can provide some of the information that the Member is asking, but I also want to share that a large portion of the children that are in care have been -- the families either have -- are under voluntary service agreements, which then they can be supported. So a lot of those children are still with their families at home but now are being able to be supported by child and family services. And when those children aren't at home because they're supporting the family and, say, family members have to go for treatment or for other things that they may be struggling with to bring that family back together, another large portion of those children are now been in placements either with their extended family or with another Indigenous family within the community or most likely in the community. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you for that information. Mr. Speaker, why is the department -- I heard this from countless people, a lot of people are saying this. Why is the department still putting Indigenous children into homes with different nationalities and different cultures from their own? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our old foster care system, you know, there wasn't -- from all of the information that I've been provided and the work that's been done within child and family services is to work with the family to find now somebody who is either within the family, next of kin, a close relative, another Indigenous person. But those families also have to, you know, go through the foster family. We have not a lot of Indigenous foster families, and the more Indigenous foster families and the more family members, when they know that there's children that are possibly, you know, that may be needing to support their own family can become foster families and be flexible, like, within child and family services to say that, you know, like, we'll take on our -- like, your nieces, our nephews, our cousins' children, and child and family services will work with those families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. This is another question families have been asking, too, is they want to know what is the department doing to reunite children, children in care with families, those who are possible? I know there are some that it's beyond their control; I'm not talking about that. Permanent ward as the last report. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department continues to follow up with families, you know, to try to meet them where they're at and to see what steps need to be put in place in order to have the children reunited into the home. And if there's specific instances where the Member, you know, has families that are feeling that this is not being done, I would encourage those families, you know, to reach out to my office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 278-20(1):  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR  
TRADITIONAL CABIN OWNERS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECC. Can the Minister tell me what supports are available to cabin owners as they clean up the charred

and damaged properties that once were their cabins? Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently, there are programs, the Harvesters Fire Damage Assistance Program, which supports harvesters across the NWT with fire damage. However, that program does not speak directly to the Member's question and it doesn't have a provision for clean-up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since they don't have a provision for clean-up. How about for assistance for cabins that were burned? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The program covers costs up to \$40,000 for harvesters to get them back on the land, back to their traditional economy lifestyle, and that could include the recovery of damage to a cabin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I have a little bit more of a different question then. My next question is what constitutes harvesters? Like, what do they have to be harvesting to be considered a harvester? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the parameters of the program indicate a harvester must have 20 percent of their annual income -- or 25 percent of their annual income come directly from the result of harvesting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. 20 percent of their annual income from harvesting, is that like harvesting fur, wood, fish? Cutting -- like, cutting wood? Picking mushrooms and doing stuff like that, is that what that means? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to speak directly to all of the specifics because I don't want to miss anything. But I will certainly provide that information back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ECC. 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. Madam Deputy Premier.

## Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 115-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE  
REPORT 55-19(2): REPORT ON BILL 55:  
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE  
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 55-19(2), Report on Bill 85: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, deputy Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of ITI.

TABLED DOCUMENT 116-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE  
REPORT 64-19(2): REPORT ON BILL 84: AN  
ACT TO AMEND THE BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT  
CORPORATION ACT

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table to the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 64-19(2), Report on Bill 84: An Act to Amend the Business Development and Investment Corporation Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of ITI. Tabling of documents. Member from Great Slave.

TABLED DOCUMENT 117-20(1):  
UNION OF NORTHERN WORKERS  
PETITION TO STOP THE CLOSURE OF THE  
MEN'S UNIT AT FORT SMITH  
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a petition titled Stop the Closure of the Men's Unit in Fort Smith, NWT, which does not strictly conform with our rules to be submitted as a petition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Tabling of documents. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 118-20(1):  
PETITION REGARDING PROPOSED  
GOVERNMENT WELLNESS AND  
RECOVERY CENTRE BUILDING IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a petition from concerned citizens

to the proposed government wellness and recovery centre building at 5019 - 51st Street in Yellowknife. That's in downtown Yellowknife Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 34-20(1):  
SUPPORTING RCMP RESPONSE TO  
MENTAL HEALTH

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Range Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories work in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to implement a crisis intervention team, through a partnership that supports the response to mental health emergencies, at an appropriately staffed level in order to maintain 24/7 support;

And further, the purpose of the crisis intervention worker is to enhance the response and reduce police contact in mental health related emergencies and allow the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to focus their efforts on disrupting the drug trade in the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs direct the emergency management organization to review, analyze, and comment on every emergency plan for every Northwest Territories community;

And furthermore, that the Minister of -- is this the right motion? I think this is the wrong motion, Mr. Speaker. I believe it's the wrong notice of motion. Maybe I'll seek unanimous consent later to return to this item. Thank you.

(audio) Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll seek unanimous consent to return given if there's willingness of the House. I think I have the wrong one. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Motions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Motions

MOTION 33-20(1):  
MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP,  
CARRIED

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS municipalities and community governments across the Northwest Territories are inadequately resourced to operate their communities and have been advocating to increase funding levels from the Government of the Northwest Territories for several years;

AND WHEREAS the \$5 million increase in community government funding realized in the 19th Assembly does not recognize the increased inflationary costs to communities;

AND WHEREAS communities across the Northwest Territories have been facing emergencies since 2020 through COVID-19, flooding, and wildfires. The Northwest Territories communities are the first line of defense to protect residents and respond to emergencies and communities do this without dedicated resources and funding;

AND WHEREAS the economic multiplier of money spent through municipalities is greater than spending through other levels of government, it is estimated that for every \$1 million of municipal activity, there is potential to create 13.11 jobs;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories is in a time of fiscal restraint and the Northwest Territories economic outlook is in a slow decline, prioritizing money directly for communities provides an economic stimulus for employment and economic development across the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS in July of 2023, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs updated the policies to address the municipal funding gap, but the implementation of funding associated with those policies is not reflected in the 2024-2025 Budget;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories reallocate internal funding resources without

delay to implement the revised municipal funding gap policies;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories balance the current discrepancies between communities regarding the percentage of the formula funding they receive;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories make the calculation of the municipal funding gap, by community, publicly available;

AND FURTHERMORE, the Government of the Northwest Territories acknowledge the increased costs facing communities through public emergencies and natural disasters and allocate a new stream of funding for public safety and emergency preparedness into the municipal funding gap calculations;

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To kick off debate, I'll keep my comments short. Everything I said in the motion was a collaborative approach from my colleagues. We are united in the context of understanding that we know our communities need more help. Some have not got the funding they've been struggling with despite the challenges they must step up and deal with. At this point, I'll close my comments early, and I'll use my chance at the end of the motion to be much further detailed. But that said, I want to thank my colleagues to date for their insight in getting behind the motion, recognizing how important municipalities are and how we have to find ways to support them, and hopefully this motion does that. So I look forward to the context and the debate today. Thank you.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to stand in support of this one. I appreciate the Member for Yellowknife Centre bringing it forward. Certainly as a former city councillor, the municipal funding gap is one that's near and dear to my heart. I appreciate the Member taking the time to consider input of various Members, including myself, and just would like to speak to the practicality of this motion, talking about balancing the discrepancy between

communities regarding the percentage of formula funding they receive. I think these are things that MACA's been working with NWTAC on for a number of years but we just seem to not get it to the point of getting it done, and so I very much in the interim want to see that balance brought into reality. And then furthermore, that we, you know, ultimately close the gap. And I spoke to the mayor of my community recently about this and she emphasized the importance of it again, is just closing the gap is important, funding our communities is important, you know, ensuring that they have the money that they need for various infrastructure. I know in my community in Yellowknife, we definitely have a building infrastructure deficit, as many communities do, over -- all across Canada, and it's just -- it's a constant struggle, and it's certainly something that I think is worth the GNWT paying its time to and paying attention to and putting money towards. So I do support the motion, and I'll leave my comments at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the motion. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seconded this motion. I, as my colleagues know, it's something I brought up in this House as well. A former councillor, a former mayor of my town, and someone obviously who works closely with the current Mayor Wood and his council up there, very important that we do bridge this gap and this work get done to ensure that the funding is done equitably throughout the territory. And I won't take any more time than that other than to say full support and thank the Member for Yellowknife Centre for bringing it forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the motion. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand and support this motion. It's a shame that we continue to have to raise this issue time and time and time and time again. So I'm very much looking forward to this motion being the final motion that we need to raise to fund our communities according to our own formula financing. So if you care about communities, you support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I will also be supporting this motion. It's well known, and certainly those of us who have

been in municipal government, know how deep this cuts when it comes to the impacts on municipalities. But just to give some more perspective on, you know, where the gap -- or the size of the gap that we're dealing with. You know, according to our government's own calculations, so in terms of water and waste funding, on average, communities only get about 52 percent of what they're owed. On average, in terms of operations and maintenance funding, communities get about 74 percent of what they're owed. And in terms of capital, communities get about 77 percent of what they're owed. And certainly, it varies a lot between communities. And just to go over a few examples in terms of those on the lowest end of things, so in terms of water and waste funding, Yellowknife, for example, only gets 20 percent of what it's owed according to the formula, followed by Fort Smith at 31 percent. But it's not just Yellowknife. So in terms of O and M funding, the lowest community is actually Norman Wells at 49 percent. And in terms of capital funding, the lowest paid community is Inuvik only getting 57 percent. So this really is something that affects communities all across the territory, and I hope we make some solid progress in this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will support this motion as well. In small communities, we can see and feel the funding gaps greatly, especially in small communities where a lot of our infrastructures are deteriorating. Even in my community alone, to replace the water and sewer line will cost about \$10 million. We have to apply for outside funding to fix that. So this funding gap will help greatly, especially in small communities. Thank you.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion. As my colleague from the Monfwi had mentioned, the small communities outside of Norman Wells really are feeling the impacts of its costs, costs, costs. Everything we do in that region is either shipped in during barge, if there is one, and then wait another six months until the big trucks start rolling in. So it's a very costly operating area, and without government we have no industry. Those are just a few of the number of reasons why I'll be supporting this motion. Mahsi.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in small communities, such as Deninu Kue, it's a tax-based community, and I got four communities that I represent and there's three that are a non-tax-based community. Regardless, Mr. Speaker, you know, we have problems with trying to find the funding gap to fix the problems we're having in small communities. In my community, we have problems with lot development, and we can't build homes if we don't get the money needed to build these lots. And trying to find a way to fix the problem, if we don't fix this problem then we're going to have problems fixing -- meeting the four priorities of this government in the 20th Assembly. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll be supporting this motion. Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have sat on council for 15 years, so this has always been a topic in my agenda, and I ran on it with my elections. I'm sure you all are aware of that. But I would like to thank the Members for bringing this motion to the floor today. I agree with the Members on the important role of municipal governments and the importance of funding communities appropriately.

I want to take the moment to share some information on what funding MACA provides. MACA currently provides over \$120 million in annual funding through community government funding policies. This funding supports community governments in delivering core municipal services, including administration, recreation, public safety, and public works. An additional \$2.5 million will be allocated for operations and maintenance. An additional \$1.3 million will be allocated for water, waste, and sewer, pending the approval of the 2024-2025 Main Estimates. I believe that the Members will be pleased to hear that MACA is working towards implementing revised funding allocations as part of the updates of the community government funding policies that were approved in October 2023. The revised calculations will ensure that funding is distributed equitably across the community governments based on core services expected to be available in the communities.

In closing, Mr. Speakers, I want to acknowledge that funding sustainability, sustainable community government services is a shared responsibility of all levels of government. The



GNWT remains committed to working in partnership with our community governments and to advocating for more funding from the federal governments in ways that will best serve municipal services' needs and the NWT residents. Cabinet will abstain from this vote for this motion and will prepare a complete response within 120 days as requested.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Hay River South. To the motion. Final closing the discussion, Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get to the details of my final comments, I want to thank the Member for Boot Lake. He's relentless on this issue. And those of you reading or listening at home or those historians 20 years from now that pay -- combing through Hansard, they heard it here, this Member's been relentless on municipal issues, so certainly by all means. He just every day brings up help Inuvik; we need more stuff. But in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, he is a good Member, and I do appreciate the work and support he's given this initiative. That said, I support all Regular Members on their support. As a matter of fact, I noticed, just by counting heads quickly, most of us have served in one form or another on a band council or a municipal council. I mean, when you hear MLA from Yellowknife North's point, I mean, that's a struggle they faced every day when I served on council. And I'm glad she highlighted half the discrepancies. And that's part of the reason the motion is here.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't -- you know, the challenge municipalities are facing under inflationary costs or not being appreciated. I mean, the fact is that, you know, this is about just balancing and bringing fairness throughout.

Just in short, Mr. Speaker, \$52 million, we all know is the current gap. I mean, no one's asking for the absolute cheque to be written, but we would certainly know that our communities would welcome the finance Minister to show up with her credit card to find a way to deal with that outstanding balance, if I may say.

She also noted in her budget speech -- and just for those reading along, page 4 in case anyone was interested -- it said they have a \$294 million projected surplus. So there must be some room to help communities like Tu Nedhe in the Tu Nedhe riding or the Deh Cho riding when they see Enterprise struggle. So, Mr. Speaker, there are reasonable requests out there, people are looking for help.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward on this particular thing, you know, I call upon the Honourable Minister for Municipal and

Community Affairs, you know, help us help you fulfill that election promise. Help us by voting for this motion, and feel free to be brave. And as I said in my Member's statement earlier today, the fear of doing change, I support the Minister to stand up and vote with us, Mr. Speaker, because I know he can do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to, again, thank all my colleagues. And I will ask for a recorded vote on this particular initiative. And I look forward to the government's detailed response with a simple word, yes. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Member from Yellowknife Centre has asked for a recorded vote. For all those in favour, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot 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 Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All 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 South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. 11 in favour, zero opposed, six abstaining. The motion has passed.

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, 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-to(1), Tabled Document 111-20(1).

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as the Speaker under Rule 2.2(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment until 8 o'clock p.m. to consider the

business of the House, with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the chair.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I'll go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Minister's Statement 24-20(1), as well, Mr. Chair, the committee would like to consider Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, and Tabled Document 93-20(1), 2024-2025 Main Estimates, Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the Housing Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Attention, order. Thank you. Consideration of 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).

Committee, we have agreed to consider Minister's Statement 4-20(1), 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season. I will now open the floor to general comments for Minister's Statement 4-20(1). General comments? Seeing none, thank you. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 4-20(1), 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee agree, thank you. Committee, we will have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 4-20(1).

Committee, we have agreed to consider Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Emergency Management Preparation. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Minister's Statement 5-20(1). Is there any general comments? Seeing none, thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Minister's

Statement 5-20(1), Emergency Management Preparation?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Agreed? Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 5-20(1).

Committee, we have agreed to consider Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Reach an Average of \$10-a-day Child Care in the NWT. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Minister Statement 17-20(1). Any questions? Thank you.

Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Reaching an Average of \$10-a-day Child Care in NWT? Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 17-20(1).

Committee, we have agreed to consider Minister's Statement 24-20(1), Health and Human Resources Recruitment and Retention. I will now open the floor to general comments on this Minister's Statement 24-20(1). Any general comments? Seeing none, thank you.

Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 24-20(1), Health and Human Resources Recruitment and Retention? Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We will have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 24-20(1).

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025. Minister of Finance, please proceed with your opening remarks.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm happy to present Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025. This document proposes a total increase of \$142.1 million, comprised of the following items:

- \$146.9 million for infrastructure expenditures funding for projects that were not completed in 2023-2024. This amount is fully offset by unspent appropriations in 2023-2024;
- \$2.3 million for the relocation of modular classrooms from Yellowknife to Tuktoyaktuk;
- \$2.8 million for increased costs associated with the acquisition of portables for Colville Lake;
- \$1.1 million for increased costs associated with the Western Arctic Research Centre Warehouse Project;
- \$6 million for cost increases related to the Whati Access Road. This funding is fully offset by revenues received from the federal government;
- \$38 million to Northwest Territories Power Corporation to alleviate financial pressures resulting from the Inuvik Wind Project cost escalations. This is offset with a decrease of \$40.59 million to reflect changes in the timing of planned expenditures for various projects; and last,
- A decrease of \$14.5 million to reflect changes in the timing of planned expenditures for the runway extension and civil improvement projects.

That concludes opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be happy to answer questions that Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring in witnesses into the House?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on my left is Bill MacKay, the deputy minister for the Department of Finance. On my right, Terence Courtoreille, deputy secretary to the financial management board.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We'll review the supplementary estimates by department. The committee has agreed to

forego general comments on each department. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled documents?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will begin the review with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Committee, please turn to page 5, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$513,000. Are there any questions? I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask about this Western Arctic Research Centre. I know that it was noted -- sorry? Oh, we're just on the first line; okay, I'm sorry. I thought we were going page by page. Apologies, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We're still on page 5, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$513,000. Are there any questions? There is no further questions if I remember earlier.

Continuing on, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized -- I'll finish reading here -- to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$513,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, \$3,182,000. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I do apologize. I just thought we were going on the pages here, but now on to this line item.

So the Western Arctic Research Centre warehouse replacement, I know that this one was one that Aurora College spent a significant amount of money on as part of the transition

funding that they received. I'm just wondering if the Minister or her staff can give any clarification on how this Western Arctic Research Centre warehouse relates to transition to the university. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the proposed warehouse is related, really, to the research efforts and research work that is done with and through Aurora College. And more specifically, this will enlarge our total research support capacity space by 70 percent. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you. That's it for me on this one. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any other questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, \$3,182,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,695,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we'll turn to page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$36 million. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on this one I just note that, you know, there's been pretty significant cost overruns on this project, and now here MLAs are being asked to free up another appropriation for it. And I can't help but feel a bit, you know, like, we're kind of beholden to this. We don't really have much of a choice but to deal with it. But to get to the question, you know, does the department have

some lessons learned and some changes to the way contracting is managed to prevent cost overruns of this kind of magnitude from happening again? I'd be curious to hear from the Minister what we're doing to ensure that cost overruns like this -- that we have mechanisms in place to stop this from happening while the project is going on so that we don't end up with overruns of an enormous magnitude, you know, at the point where the project is either implemented or most of the way forward and so we don't really have much choice but to simply kind of eat the extreme cost overruns. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this certainly did experience some rather significant, and in many cases, fairly unusual overruns. I mean, this was a circumstance where the funding was approved at a time prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. And this is obviously not the only project to have experienced delays as a result of that, but certainly is one. But then those delays related to supply chain, related to materials, related to labour shortages, were magnified when there was another -- there was a third party accident in terms of transporting one of the key items and then the vendor failed to supply a key item even when the item did arrive. So those are fairly unusual events.

That said, altogether, I will note NTPC is, indeed, completing a cost construction report. That is a requirement under the Public Utilities Board for major projects. It will also, I'll note, be coming out publicly when the NTPC has to participate or submit its request or report to the 2024-2025 GRA, which the public utility board has also recently required. So with that in hand, that will provide some valuable direction and insights hopefully into avoiding those aspects of this, which could be avoidable in the future. Thank you.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Does the government have kind of a wider plan for managing cost overruns in general on contracts? Like, is there -- because, you know, it's not just this project. Obviously, we're seeing a number of different ones and, you know, this is the second set of supplementary appropriations I've seen in my short time here. And, yeah, I'm just curious. I mean, it just seems to be, you know, projects tend to balloon, you know, the costs just go up and up and up. I'm just wondering if we have any kind

of planning policy changes in place or being planned to kind of get at this problem, and perhaps even just to estimate the cost of projects more accurately so we can assess them for how much they're actually going to cost when they're first approved.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is not -- the overages and cost escalations we're seeing on a number of key projects here in the last couple of years really are not typical and shouldn't be considered as typical. There are a number of examples to point to of projects that come in on budget and on time. And even right now, for example, the Inuvik airport project is on schedule. It has certainly caught itself back up notwithstanding challenges that initially may have occurred immediately post-COVID and then of course in the course of inflation. So I'm certainly wanting to just note that that's, again, not necessarily typical. But when they are obviously large of this magnitude, it garners a significant amount of attention for public dollars.

Couple of things. One, the capital planning process has had some significant changes just in the last couple of years. So I suggest that I'll turn that to Mr. Courtoreille to speak to that has been -- he has been the lead on it. And the point, really, has been to improve and increase the kind of planning we do so that we have better estimates and better processes to go through that. But I'll just turn to him to describe that, please.

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

**MR. TERENCE COURTOREILLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister mentioned, we're going through a number of changes with the capital planning process. One of those changes in relation to this question is implementing a peer review group, and that group is going to be led by the Department of Infrastructure. And it's largely working with departments to ensure that cost estimates are robust enough before the government makes a construction decision, or before those projects are contemplated for MLA approval in our capital budgets going forward, so that those cost estimates are a true reflection of what we expect those costs to be going forward as we enter the construction phase of those projects. Thank you, sir.

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

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

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just so we can get this on the record, can you tell us what is the cost up to this point, then, of the Inuvik Wind Project in total?

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. \$88 million.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And can you tell us what was the original budget? Therefore, you know, how much this project has gone over. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to make sure that I have the right number in this. Around \$40 million, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, I echo some of my colleague's concerns there, but I just wanted to make sure that we're all clear, the scale of the cost overruns that we're talking about in this case.

And so it looks like part of where we're finding the money to pay for these cost escalations is to reduce money going into NTPC upgrades. Looks like \$2 million is being taken out of that. So what kind of upgrades are we sacrificing here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's projects that I believe are generally resulting from a delay in the projects -- sorry, let me start that again.

There was a delay in some of the upgrade projects and knowing that there would be some delays, they were able to reallocate those funding. So, really, all of the projects on these lists are not cancelled, necessarily. It's that there's a recognition that there are things not happening at the pace that they were originally expected to, for a variety of different reasons,

but then we're able to take that money and put that towards this area of need. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so these upgrades, are they set out in, say, an asset management plan? Like, is there a plan with scheduled upgrades that, you know, is justified based on expected, you know, life of certain parts of our assets, or are they expected -- you know, need for replacement and maintenance at certain times? Are these upgrades part of such a plan that, you know, has been thought through and listed what upgrades are required at which dates?

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is, indeed, an overall asset management plan and capital project plan for NTPC and, you know, some of that involves studies that are being done around what alternatives and changes could move forward, what communities might see, you know, advancement of hydro projects and, in some cases, those studies can be funded elsewhere, or in other cases can be delayed, and in other cases, again, some of the future improvements projects can be pushed back or have planning done in advance hopefully to produce better estimates, although, again, in this case, it was -- this estimate of \$40 million, I just want to note was from back in 2017. So to say we went from an estimate in 2017 to a final cost in 2024 that is significantly different, ideally we're in a situation going forward and, again, including with some of those that are put on hold, that that gives us some time to have a better estimate going in. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess what I'm trying to get at here is if we set out ahead of time that certain equipment or infrastructure needs upgrading or replacing or maintenance or repair at certain times, it's generally based on our expected costs of what would happen if we didn't do those upgrades or maintenance or repairs, you know, things might start to break down or they don't work efficiently, or. Do we expect any increase costs in repair, maintenance, O and M, from delaying upgrades that NTPC has previously identified that it requires? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, not necessarily. So there certainly are, you know, standard periods of time on any piece of infrastructure or equipment that would suggest, you know, an ideal window within which you would replace or repair or renovate and, you know, any sort of deferred maintenance across the entire government spectrum has those built in. But by not doing it, you may be increasing the risk of a future -- increasing the risk that the equipment or the asset can become unused or less useable or less efficient, but that doesn't necessarily guarantee that it is in that situation. So obviously when the decisions are being made as to exactly what projects or what planning studies or what research to delay or should be delayed or just may frankly be delayed, that would be the ones that we would want to take money out of, whether it's, again, any infrastructure or situation would be the same, NTPC being no different than that. There's always a balance that's every year done around -- out of the pool of funding available for any given year for maintenance, what areas have the greatest risk and need and those ones get priorities, and maybe others that are ready to go in terms of timing that just have to be delayed. 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. That's all my questions for this one.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When is the cost construction report for the Inuvik Wind Project due to be released? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. The costs for construction?

(audio)

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay; I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. I don't have great ears in this room. So that's the post-construction report, and that is going to be part of the submission that is made for the 2024-2025 GRA that the Public Utilities Board has requested. I believe that is due by the end of December.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. And my apologies to the Minister. I think I heard costs, and it's post, which makes much more sense. Is there any way that that report just around the Inuvik Wind Project can be released ahead of the GRA application and tabled in the House? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know. It may have to go to the Public Utilities Board. So it is a requirement of the Public Utilities Board process. So I'll have to just see what the requirements of that process are and whether or not we're able to split off the post-construction report separately and in advance, and if so, I would have no trouble tabling. But, again, I'll just have to double check with that process. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Would the Minister -- would there be any issues if -- no, never mind. Okay, I look forward to that. Because I think there is interest at tackling this from a value for money perspective and from an independent body that is not the power corp looking into its own costs. So I know that that's a discussion that we've had as Members, and if there's any way to get this information out there, then we can take that report and do something with it, whether it's a review by standing committee or bringing in some sort of independent expertise to look at it. But I know there is a lot of interest in this, so can the Minister commit to getting us that information in some form so we can take a look at it with our own lens? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the Public Utilities Board is an independent body, so it is to them that we would be submitting this for their review by technical experts who are independent from NTPC. In addition to which, Mr. Chair, the NTPC is also audited by the Office of the Auditor General and so, again, any expenses incurred and costs incurred, etcetera, will go through that process as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Yes, thank you. And, I mean, an audit is -- I think we're looking for more of a performance audit rather than just a financial audit. I think the accounting is clear. It's more the performance of the project. So I guess we'll

wait, but I know that this is not anywhere near to being a closed issue should -- you know, like, this is an extraordinary amount of money for an infrastructure project that is important but, notably, is not actually lowering the cost of living for anyone in the Northwest Territories. So for this much money to go into a project that is having an impact on greenhouse gas emissions, which is good, but not doing much more than that, I think we really do need to take a look at this because is this best value for money, and I'm not convinced at this point. Thank you.

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

Is there any further questions? No, okay. We'll continue on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$36 million. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$36 million. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, please turn to page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, community operations, not previously authorized, \$51,460,000. Is there any questions?

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, community operations, not previously authorized, \$51,460,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$51,460,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$16,776,000. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I absolutely agree that we need to make sure that there is appropriate space for kids to go to school in Tuktoyaktuk and Coville Lake and all the other places. Just to clarify, though, is this \$2.325 million definitely going to get those modular classrooms up to Tuk and get them set up and going? Do we have confirmation that that is what it will take, and we will be able to do that with that amount of money? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Chair, sadly, the answer to that is no. This is one particular item that was fairly near and dear to my heart and that I was watching very closely so that these portables would be the first ones on the barge that was due to head north. Obviously with no barges heading north, there are no portables heading north. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** So I guess my question is if we approve \$2.325 million at this time, is that money just going to go towards continued efforts of any kind, and we might see another supplementary estimate or appropriation come our way in the future? I'm just unclear why we're being asked now for \$2.325 million and what we expect to accomplish with that money now that we have encountered these kinds of challenges with the barge?

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, this is a matter of timing of why it comes before the House. So the modular units were in Yellowknife and were due to be dismantled and then find their new home. And so that work was already underway, and so part of the costs here actually have already been incurred. And then they were to be moved -- then meanwhile, also there was site preparation underway up in Tuktoyaktuk to receive the modulars when they arrived there.

And a fair bit of the cost actually was related to demobilizing and deconstructing and then preparing the site. The transportation costs was only around \$120,000 of the total cost that's involved. So now all that said, obviously, that portion and any further building in Tuk is being delayed pending what happens in terms if we can find some other option within the parameters of the funding that is being proposed here. At the moment, I don't have another option to propose, but again, with those works already well underway when this came forward, we are still bringing it to Assembly for this costing and, again, there's -- you know, I know the Minister for ECE and Minister of Infrastructure are both keen to see that some solution can be found. I just at the moment don't have one. But, really, the site preparation, again, was already underway and was a large part of the cost. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I definitely appreciate the challenges and the dilemma that we're in. I'm just concerned that we're approving money for something that we might not be able to actually accomplish.

On the second one, in term of the acquisition of portables for Colville Lake, do we have a better news story on that one? Do we expect that that will actually be accomplished with the \$2.824 million?

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so, again, this is a situation where there's a number of breakdowns of things. Site preparation is really about half, if not more than half, of the cost. And so the short answer should be yes, because these ones are coming up on the winter road, and so we are still anticipating that that will be ready to roll for 2025. And site preparation, as I note, that is a significant portion of the rest of that cost, so probably over \$2 million or \$2.4 million roughly. Obviously, we'll wait and see what the financial bill is on that. I don't know that I have a final in front of me but that is a fairly specific estimate. Costs on the winter road, then are another part of it. Some support to the community to ensure that it's their members of their community that are building and participating in the construction. But, yes, so, again, assuming everything is ready to roll as scheduled, then we are expecting this will come up on the winter road and will be good to go. Thank you.



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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, that's good news at least. I expect we'll just continue to be having conversations about the challenges with classroom space in Tuk and hope that we come to a resolution as soon as we can. Thank you

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for providing some of the information in her previous statement which answers my question about the Colville Lake school. And I was looking at the original tendered price and now some more money going towards that, and it's going towards the site preparations, is my understanding. So that explains over and above why the additional funds are being requested. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Chair, thank you. And, yes, to be clear, the single biggest difference is on this item, and why it is back before the Assembly for supplementary appropriation, is, indeed, the site preparation, contract and tender, which was significantly higher than originally estimated, that as well as the costs of having a crane there to place units, again, in the community, and last, there are, again, some ongoing quality controls elements to the site preparation. So, really, it is all related to ensuring that the community of Colville Lake is ready to receive those units when they arrive. Thank you.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just provide some comments or some advice here. The proposed school location, not the portables, the proposed school location is -- I'm going to take a guess -- probably 40 yards away from the health centre. And the health centre is sitting on foundation, a piling foundation, and that's being proposed for the new school. And I'm told that the engineers are possibly using that to cancel that particular site. So if you say, well, your if neighbour's on piles, why shouldn't this project be on piles? So it would be a good follow-up question there as we move ahead for the site investigation for the new school. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is an additional contract item. It does note further down below with respect to the major project in Colville Lake for their school, they are still in a design stage on that project, Mr. Chair, and the community did have an engagement just last spring to sort of rebegin the process of concerning where they're at in this -- what is becoming a fairly long project. I know further that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is reaching out to the community, to the chief, to see that there is sort of a renewed timeline on this. That engagement was only just in March of this year, again, with the hope that, indeed, we are at a point where design issues is clear as -- from the community side, and I believe we are still waiting on a response from the community on that letter. Thank you.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next question is further on down the list at \$1.2 million there, you have the Colville Lake portables in brackets of three. Is there two or three of these portables? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me just double check, Mr. Chair. My list also says three, Mr. Chair. So I believe three is the number. Thank you.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** My list was telling me two the last time I was in Edmonton. So you might want to double check on that there, please. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will certainly confirm that, whether that's with the other hat that I wear or with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. There is an outstanding work happening in Alberta that has been the source of some delay, and we are all keen to see that there is no further delay. As I mentioned earlier, these need to be on the winter road, which does come with certain project timelines that, again, I'm quite keen to see are not lost. Thank you.

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

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Is there any further questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 services, not previously authorized, \$16,776,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$16,776,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, please turn to page 9. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Is there any questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, environment management monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Does committee agree -- oh, sorry, any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, environment management monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, regional operations,

not previously authorized, \$181,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, regional operation, not previously authorized, \$181,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Is there any questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$319,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,138,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, please turn to page 10.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$18,767,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, management board secretariat, not previously authorized, \$18,767,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Continuing on. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$3,611,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$3,611,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$118,000. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Seeing none. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$118,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$22,496,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 11.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$4,711,000. Are there any questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$4,711,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social services programs, not previously authorized, \$10,180,000. Any questions? Seeing none.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social services programs, not previously authorized, \$10,180,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, long-term care and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$3,608,000. Any questions? No further questions.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, long-term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$3,608,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Continuing on. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$18,499,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 12.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$673,000. Are there any questions?

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$673,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously

authorized, \$189,000. Are there any questions? Continuing on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$189,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$2,701,000. Are there any questions? Continuing on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$2,701,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,563,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 13.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$15,591,000. Are there any questions? Continuing on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$15,591,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, negative \$3,863,000.

Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions. Continuing on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, negative \$3,863,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services, not previously authorized, negative \$25,170,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions. I'll continue on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services, not previously authorized, negative \$25,170,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$13,442,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Please turn to page 15.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, corrections, not previously authorized, \$808,000. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The security and intercom system upgrade, Fort Smith, transfer van replacement, Fort Smith, which facilities are those lines -- or which facility in Fort Smith is this going to impact? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So it is showing as being aligned to the Fort Smith correctional complex, which obviously does house both the men's and women's facility, and the one latter -- or the men's facility being one which is now targeted for part of a reduction and to be moving forward

towards hopefully a shift into a wellness facility of some fashion, subject to discussions with the community and the vision that they may have for it. So obviously there may be changes that are coming to where this project will go in a capital project -- where the capital project will go in the next fiscal year. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Just to clarify, so this money that's in this supp, this is going to -- are these improvements for the men's side of the facility, or does it work that way? So just the entire facility, or are we able to drill down into that? Because it seems odd that we're going to spend \$398,000 and -- well, \$398,000 on a facility that we're planning on shuttering. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is -- well, so part of this was with respect to the radio system -- I'll start with that -- the radio system at the men's facility is older, it did not integrate with the women's facility. So at the time of preparing, not knowing of course, what may or may not come of the proposals that are a part of Operations Budget 2024, subject to those approvals, if the facility in Fort Smith remained operational and remained opened in its complete state, they would require security upgrades because the current facility does not meet its requirements. Certainly, if this -- if the decision or the proposal to close the men's facility in Fort Smith goes forward, that will certainly impact whether or to what extent all of this funding is required.

The last comment on that, there was two phases to the programs -- or to this proposed project so the carryover, again, is pending the final decision on the 2024-2025 Main Estimates but we, timing being what it is, have to bring forward the supplementary requests here for another supplementary appropriation on the infrastructure budget, which was approved back in October. But, yes, again, obviously if there is, in fact, the closure of the men's facility that goes forward and a change in the approach and to how that might get used going forward, well then, we'd be certainly likely to save some money since the requirements are hopefully not as much. I mean, I'm saying this with hopefullies because I don't know the final will or desire of the community or the leadership, only that engagement with them has begun to see what the vision might be and to then be able to align the Government of the Northwest Territories with that vision. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as the Premier pointed out when we reviewed Justice, there is no wellness centre in this -- sorry, in the other document we'll be reviewing, but there is no wellness centre on the books. There's an idea of a wellness centre. It is uncosted. It is unplanned. It is a conversation starter. So I don't think we should be talking about how we're going to use this appropriation to support any other infrastructure projects when none of them are even in the planning stage. And furthermore, I just want to point out, I guess for the record, is last week the Premier hadn't engaged in discussions with the community on the future post-this-facility or the plan to close it, so this is -- I'm glad these things are happening now, but it would have been nice to see them happen beforehand.

What -- if we -- if this supplementary appropriation is approved and the facility goes away, what happens to this? Like, how -- where will this money go? Will it just be reallocated to different projects? Because I'm not really comfortable giving the department a slush fund around this capital that's untied to a specific project. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe what the Premier had talked about last week was conversations that began in part with Minister Macdonald who also happens to be the MLA from the region. And, yes, the idea of shifting from having a correctional facility to having a wellness facility at this time is uncosted and unplanned because it's part of a proposed budget. Just as one might want to see changes in upgrades or changes to different departments' budgets, which have certainly been the discussion on the floor of this House, both in COW and otherwise, increasing budgets without costing and without planning can be done but then it's done without costing and it's done without planning. So if we want to make changes, then sometimes that's the situation that we find ourselves in. In this particular instance, we have a facility. We understand what it is, we understand that it is unused. We know that there is a number of well-trained staff in the community who have an area of expertise that can hopefully allow them to align themselves with some new training that would then serve the community. And we know that there's a great ask for a wellness facility, frankly, in many regions across the Northwest Territories but certainly not the least of which

would be the South Slave. So the proposal at this time is unplanned and uncosted. It will likely involve some sort of infrastructure budget. Whether this can be moved or not, I suspect not, and the reason for that is it is probably restricted funding, meaning it will not be able to be utilized for anything that it is not assigned for. In this case, it is for correctional upgrades for the intercom system for a project that was undertaken that began in the last Assembly -- sorry, that began in the last fiscal year and it moved forward to now. It's being carried forward because it wasn't completed. Carry forwards require that there be projects either already in progress or already under contract and, in this case, it's in progress and I believe under contract and therefore does need to get carried forward, or at least that's proposed. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Yes, thank you. Okay, well that resolves the expenditure problem. But I think -- I just really want to drill down on this thing that there is not a proposal for a wellness plan. It's not in the pre -- there's not a preplanning thing. It's not being proposed in the budget. It's included in the speech, and it's -- and that's it. So I think it's unfair to characterize this as, like, if we -- you know, if the budget gets approved, then the wellness centre moves ahead, and we transfer the jobs in Smith. Correctional officers are not social workers. They're not addictions and treatment workers as well. So there's a whole lot that needs to go into this if that budget's approved. And I think we need to be honest about how we're proceeding with this closure, and I think promising a facility that's not on the books, there's no budget attached, that's just a conversation starter, is unfair to those employees and unfair to the community of Smith. If there's a real plan, I invite the Minister and the Cabinet to bring it forward, and we'll gladly give that full consideration. Let's stop talking about something that doesn't exist. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. I'm going to continue on. Is there any further questions? I'm going to go to Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to take a different approach with this. And so if I remember correctly, there was a correction facility built in Inuvik even when -- and it was targeted for youth, in other words. And it might have been a good project from its inception, so the genesis of the project is, hey, let's provide some stuff in Inuvik. And that's okay, and that's good. But then if I

remember correctly -- again, I'm stressing if I remember it -- the Youth Justice Act changed and the facility at the time was called Arctic Tern. So they marched ahead even though they knew Arctic Tern would be obsolete by the time they cut the ribbon, that the Act had changed. And this is the cynicism the general public has with their politicians and their governments which is even when we know things are changing -- this is nothing to do with the merits of the project at the time. They're probably very valuable. But to say we have a contract or we got some federal money and we're going to do this anyway even though we know it becomes obsolete and don't worry, we'll turn it into something, is what people get frustrated by and they think of it as waste.

Now, I don't want to characterize waste in any way with the support system that may have been implied or initiated at this facility because when the initial proposal was consented upon to move forward, it probably was seen of great value and necessary. And I think that that merits may stand and speak for themselves. But that said, the government has initiated a process to close this facility and to have the appearance of buying assets and upgrades to a facility that's closing, I think kind of meets that definition of why the public is frustrated, or gets frustrated.

Now, I'm not a contract expert but I do understand enough, like most people, that when you have something in writing that, you know, there's a commitment. But I would feel very uncomfortable knowing that we've committed to a project that doesn't have a purpose. To buy a van to sit there in the driveway in hopes that one day, I would ask -- you know, I would be looking -- I'll have some questions for the Minister in a second but, you know, I would ask the question out loud saying is there a way we can defer this purchase for a more appropriate one? Maybe somebody else needs the van. Maybe it could go to some of the assets that burnt in Enterprise. I don't know what the right answer is. I'm not saying it's that easy, and I understand that. I'm just trying to say is we need to think out of the box on these things.

Does the intercom system still need its urgency? In other words, is it cheaper to pay to get out than to keep paying and have nothing in the end that who knows what'll happen? And I think that's the frustration here. It's not about it's going to Fort Smith. That is not the issue whatsoever. It's just we don't know where it's ever going to go. And if it's going to be sitting there in a shuttered facility, that's the frustration the public would have for us knowing that.

Now, as my good colleague for Range Lake had said, you know, we don't have anything in writing. And I'm grateful for an open discussion and dialogue with the community about how we can maybe find our way through this fog, and I think that's a fantastic thing. I mean, I believe in community employment, and we should inspire opportunities every chance we get. But to be telling the people of Fort Smith, specifically to tell the people of the correctional centre, that don't worry, we'll make you counsellors, it's really hard to imagine it's that simple. And even if it was that simple, they'll be sitting a long time before that actually happens. And, you know, no one is in -- no one in this room, frankly -- and I'll stress it again -- there's not a single person in this room that can tell me that the expertise lie in the sense that we'll turn guards to counsellors and we'll turn cinder blocks into healing rooms very easily. I mean, look at the trouble we're having in Fort Smith already with respect to an old residential school experience and people demand the symbolism of that to be torn down. The symbolism. I am in no position to say that that's wrong, but I can tell you it bothers people and they need to be heard.

Even the symbolism of a jail now being a place for healing causes me some, as they call it a Gordian knot, a very complex way of thinking through this thing. I don't know if you can unthread that knot. It's just difficult.

So now to my question to the Minister -- and I appreciate everyone listening to this, by the way, but it's important to think of it this way -- is there any way to pause this expenditure until we have some clarity? And it's not about spending money in Fort Smith. I want to make sure the good Member for Thebacha understands that. I want the good Member for Thebacha to understand that we're sympathetic, and we want to help you find ways to stimulate the community; there's not an issue there whatsoever. But spending money in a facility that we know, openly, is not going to be used is the challenge. So is there a way to the finance Minister to pause the actual purchasing or furthering of any contract until we really do have a plan in place that we know and understand and we're buying into? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with respect to the Inuvik facility, it is not my understanding that there was a change to the Act, but rather a challenge with terms of the actual structure of the building itself and challenges in terms of staffing it.

With respect to other facilities that remain underutilized, the Trailcross facility in Fort

Smith is also underutilized, and the community is looking at an opportunity to have that rendered as a surplus. So that is also a facility that comes from a correctional background, but the community is actively already engaged in what they can do to possibly have an opportunity to see that declared as surplus by the department and then sold to the community.

Similar conversation happening in Fort Res. There is a facility, there's an asset, there is a structure there that the community's engaged in active conversations as to whether it can be declared a surplus.

We are in a situation, Mr. Chair, where the Government of the Northwest Territories has very limited sources of incoming revenue and therefore makes it difficult to build big things that cost lots of money as we have gone through this supplementary appropriation requesting lots of money to build big things but, Mr. Chair, that leaves us with trying to find ways to be bold and creative as we have been ever so clearly directed over the last few weeks. So we come forward, and we have to let our staff know in advance, of course, when there's a change of the magnitude of closing a correctional facility, but this is not a situation where we had months, let alone years, in order to plan that transition. What we have identified is there's a facility where there is a significant underutilization of government asset, of government resources, and we've targeted, therefore, a closure, but doing so in the context of hearing repeatedly the need, for years hearing the need, for some sort of wellness facility or wellness sort of institution.

So there's, over the last few years, significant dollars have been incurred, largely incurred in prior years, to a security upgrade for an existing asset only to now to determine that, in fact, this is not the best use of dollars going forward. It is not the best use of public funds going forward to maintain this. And so what we are doing instead is saying, look, we're going to close this facility but work with the community having heard so clearly that we should actually be using public dollars in a better way. It is, in fact, frustrating when there's additions being proposed or suggested at the last minute in significant sums in a way that is unplanned and uncoded. This is not -- what we are doing is taking money out by closing the facility, not adding significant dollars in, but completing a project that was already there. The hope is that because we have invested money into this community, into this facility, and into the staff that are there, that when we say we are going to close it because it is a bad use of public dollars to keep it open, we're not just going to walk away from it, we're not just going to walk away from the staff, we're going to find a way

forward with the community to actually turn this into something useful. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not trying to create a fight on this one. Maybe I'm hearing a tone or not. I'm not. I'm just saying that is there a way to pause this investment knowing that -- I don't have the exact dates, Mr. Chairman, but I'm going to say knowing in three months that, you know, people will no longer be there. If it needs the money, then pause it, and reinvest the money. I mean, it's just that's the point I'm making. I didn't say delete it. I just seen -- this is what people see as frustrating about money. I mean, if I did say that, that's not what I was trying to imply. I was trying to imply let's just pause the expenditure specific to this knowing that no one's going to be there in a little while.

As far as the community wishing for assets, I mean, if it's community-led initiative and they want something declared surplus, which is an area I didn't want to get into, but as time runs out I'm just going to say I'll let them lead their own initiatives as they describe what's good for their community, so I want to stay out of that specifically.

So as I wrap up, Mr. Chairman, with no time left on the clock, I'm just going to say that was particularly my issue about could we defer the money for short-term until we know where we're going. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the vehicle asset is already expected for delivery in if August of 2024 but is expected to be used for the transfer of female offenders, and that facility is still required. It is the only female unit we have in the Northwest Territories. And so there's really no avoiding of that.

With respect to the security upgrades broadly at the entire complex, again, that was largely already incurred, significant dollars already incurred in 2023-2024. This is just completing the last bits of that contract. So it's -- we can't -- there's no room to stop something that is already three-quarters or larger completed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing none, I'll continue on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, corrections, not previously authorized, \$808,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$1,071,000. Is there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How much money have we spent on tenant improvements at the courthouse facility since leasing it in the first place? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have that detail in front of me. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Can the Minister commit to getting it to this -- to the House or this Member? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I can make an effort to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. So I would suggest that this -- it is a significant amount of money, and I know that the department has undertaken studies in the past on this lease and whether or not it is good value for money. And it is not, and yet we continue to operate -- or to -- we continue to hold on to this lease and to spend millions of dollars on improvements, on tenant improvements, when we could just be building a specialized facility that meets the requirements of a courthouse, which includes the secure environment for prisoner transports, for court security purposes. These are not new issues. I've spoken about these issues before in this House, and I know at one point, there was a commitment to do a feasibility study on building a courthouse. I know there have been ones in the past but a more current one. Is there a plan to actually invest in some infrastructure that gets us away from this money pit? Thank you.



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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is the kind of an infrastructure investment that is unlikely to find a federal funding partner. As such, it would be entirely borne by the Government of the Northwest Territories, which would therefore take away from the funding that we put towards health care centres, long-term care, and education, which are also fully funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories. So at this point, no, there is not a current plan to investigate spending possibly upwards of a \$100 million on a standalone facility in Yellowknife for this purpose. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So a hundred -- upwards of a hundred million, so we do have some sort of estimate of what is courthouse facility would cost, or is that the Minister kind speculating on a ceiling for a project of that size? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is the witness table currently speculating on the ceiling for a project of that size. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Is the Minister aware of how many other jurisdictions, provincial and territorial jurisdictions, rent their courthouses? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not. I suspect the Member might be.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister's correct. I believe we are the only one. So we have, again, a lease that's underperforming in terms of value for money. I appreciate that the territorial government has many different priorities, but an unsafe building that's not fit for purpose -- or sorry, perhaps unsafe is too extreme a word. But a building that known security concerns that is not fit for purpose, I don't think is in our interest to continue on this track. That's my position.

Obviously, there are so many needs in the territory, but to continue to ignore this is just throwing more and more money at this lease that will seemingly stretch into infinity. So if we're going to pitch -- if we could pitch the dream infrastructure projects, I think we need to put courthouse back on the table because this is just a bad use of public funds. And I don't need the Minister to respond. I think I made my point clear. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing none, I'll continue on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$1,071,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,879,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 16.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$80,000. Are there any questions? Seeing none, I'll continue on.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$80,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025; Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$80,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, there is a schedule on page 17 of the document, impact on capital estimates. Are there any questions? Seeing none. Thank you, committee.

Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025? Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 30-20(1):  
DEFERRAL MOTION – TABLED DOCUMENT  
111-20(1): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 1, 2024-2025

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** The motion is in order. To the motion. **SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried. Consideration of Tabled Document 111-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025, is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister, and thank you for your witnesses appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers. Thank you.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. 2024-2025 Main Estimates, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 93-20(1), 2024-2025 Main Estimates. We will now consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, please proceed with your opening remarks.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to present the 2024-2025 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$1.9 million, or 3.1 percent, over the 2023-2024 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment while continuing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending. Highlights of these proposed

estimates include initiative funding totalling \$1.2 million, which include:

- \$529,000 to continue to support the growth and potential of the Northwest Territories film and media sector and increasing the competitiveness of the NWT to generate benefits to the NWT economy;
- \$521,000 to support the completion and implementation of the Mineral Resources Act regulations; and,
- \$100,000 to continue our support of the tourism sector under Tourism 2025 towards the five-year investment strategy for the tourism sector.
- Forced growth funding totalling \$279,000, which include:
- \$149,000 to address the growing costs associated with the territorial parks' operator contracts and utilities; and
- \$130,000 to support the opening and ongoing operations and maintenance of the North Arm Territorial Park.

Other adjustments totalling \$3.3 million, which include:

- \$2.4 million to continue to support the GNWT's commitment to revitalizing the commercial fishery sector to grow and diversify the NWT economy to create jobs and to advance greater food security;
- \$489,000 to continue to support the growth of the agriculture and Agri-food sector in the NWT through partnership agreement with agriculture and Agri-food Canada;
- \$298,000 to continue to support the growth and potential of the NWT film and media sector through partnership with Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency; and,
- \$94,000 to support the increasing technology service centre chargeback costs.

Fiscal sustainability reduction of \$2.7 million to support the GNWT's fiscal strategy for the 20th Assembly by reducing expenditures to streamline programs and services, and the department will continue to find operating cost efficiencies and revenue opportunities where possible, and sunsets of \$913,000. These estimates support the priorities of the 20th

Assembly and vision of the Budget 2024 by including 75 actions in ITI's business plan.

In relation to the mandate commitment and the spirit of collaborative governance, working with partners on an economic vision for the NWT and an investment attraction action plan, ITI is continuing to work closely with the Indigenous governments on an Intergovernmental Council technical working group on the completion of the Mineral Resources Act regulations. This co-development approach will support the priority to build a strong economic foundation in a manner that meets the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and advances the long-term prosperity for all territorial residents.

Some of the other actions ITI will pursue in support of the strong economic foundation priority include working with partners to find regulatory efficiencies for the mineral resource sector and supporting responsible resource exploration and advance and operating projects including for our critical mineral departments. A strong economic foundation also depends on the strength of all our economic sectors. ITI will encourage a diverse range of economic activities by promoting entrepreneurship, fostering research and innovation, building strong partnerships, and leveraging opportunities in all regions.

Some of the actions I'm most excited about include:

- Completing a program review of the SEED program with an eye to ensuring that business supports are effective in achieving their intended purpose;
- Identifying pathways for entrepreneurship and public housing, as well as through income assistance;
- Promoting access and opportunities in nonextractive sectors, including the arts, fisheries, film, and tourism;
- Advancing plans to transition the diamond mine workforce; and
- Improving the accessibility for arts and immigration programming.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment wish to bring witnesses into the House? Thank you. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Thank you. Would the Minister introduce her witnesses.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my left I have Pamela Strand, deputy minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. And to my right, I have Nina Salvador, who is the director of corporate services and finance.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we will defer the department summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with corporate management starting at page 231 with information items on page 233. Are there any questions? Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the department's business plan, there are quite a few actions that relate to the grants and contributions policy and the work that will be done to streamline and put all ITI's programs or applicable programs under that policy. I'm wondering if the Minister can elaborate on that work a little bit more and what she believes the timeline will look like. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, can I pass to the deputy minister for that one, please.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, yes, the timeline will probably be over the life of the government. We haven't yet figured out which ones will come first, but it does modernize all of our programs and puts them all under one roof so that we can have consistency, openness, and transparency, especially on areas like appeals. Right now, they are different for all the different programs

and so, yeah, we'll have a staged approach, you know, starting this fiscal. 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. Thank you to deputy minister Strand for that as well. Can the Minister or her deputy minister please explain if the work that ITI is going to be conducting on this policy will be taken to the directors of policy for consistency across government? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's an ITI policy, so it would be centered there, but as with most of our work we are always happy to share, especially when it is good news stories that are working well within the department. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, thank you for that clarification. But grants and contributions policies are generally used across government, so I hope there is some -- I hate this word -- synergies for the rest of the GNWT to at least maybe learn from your lessons.

The other question I have on this activity is what has made corporate costs jump a significant amount from the 2023-2024 Main Estimates? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the significant amount of increase between the main estimates actually comes from internal budget transfers of corporate related costs, and corporate related costs are employee future benefits, which are things like severance, parental leave, sick leave, annual leave, lieu time. So that's where the most significant amount of cost has come from, and then the second most significant is TSE chargebacks.

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

**MS. REID:** It's okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there ANY further questions? Seeing none, I'll continue on. Please turn to page 232.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate operations, operations expenditure summary,

2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$9,579,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to economic diversification and business support, beginning on page 234 with information items on page 238. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to kick this off, I just want to clarify if -- with the Minister if I have questions around ITI's economic vision and investment strategy, is this the right place? Yeah, okay, fantastic.

So in ITI's business plan, the economic vision to 2035 is spoken about as well as an investment strategy. Is the intent to create and release these documents sooner than later in the life of this Assembly? I'll start there, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, these documents are largely approaches and visions, and I am apprehensive to put timelines around them because they are not going to be solely GNWT-driven documents. They're going to be documents that really bring together the voices of Northerners right across our territory. We have heard a lot of really good things across the territory, a lot of momentum in this field lately, especially in regards to Indigenomics and so this is a space for us to come together through Council of Leaders. This is a space for us to come together with voices, for example, through the Indigenous Leaders Economic Forum and really bring all of these visions together in one place. I think we're at a point in the history of the NWT where we really need to be hustling together in the same direction, and so there's a huge amount of opportunity that sits in front of us and these documents are a place for us to bring all of our voices together. 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 to the Minister for that. I did write in my notes "with partners" on both of these. So kind of anticipated that answer. And recognizing, of course, that the Minister doesn't want to speak for the partners of the GNWT too-too much on this one, I am still curious if the department has sort of handle on what kind of outputs or outcomes they're looking for from these

documents. I'm assuming they'll be cornerstone documents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's difficult to put timelines and to put cornerstone outputs on these without working together with our partners. I think that part of these documents being so successful is that they have to include everybody's voices, and everybody has to be able to see themselves in it. So to start with, with outputs without actually defining where we're going to go on this path together and what our common goals are, I think would be unfair. And so I hear, I think, the Member's desire to see something sooner than later and to really be able to drive momentum and inspiration, hope for the territory from getting these documents out, and I share the Member's intent in that, and I think a lot of residents do, and so this is definitely a focus of mine but something that I definitely want to do in the true spirit of collaboration and partnership. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I guess my last question is more of a comment. I hope that the Minister feels inspired to share any scoping or preliminary work as things go ahead and as partners come to an agreement. So I think that's more of a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't repeat the questions on the economic planning. I pretty much just agree with what the Member for Great Slave just asked about and her comments on it. But moving on under this department, the business plan, again, page 154, the support for arts. So I actually support the mandate commitment, I do appreciate seeing continued support NWT Arts and arts organizations. I won't read out the whole thing. But noting that increased number of funded artists and arts organizations funding, just to that point. I've spoken about this a couple times over budget deliberations but just to note that, you know, just increasing the number of individuals receiving funding does not necessarily speak to kind of the health of the industry and can sometimes not necessarily work towards building the health of the industry as much as core funding for organizations. So I just wanted to hear -- I just kind of -- I guess I mostly just want to get that comment on the

table and would suggest that if we could get targets identified that speak more to kind of growth in the industry overall and taking action which will include -- which will lead to that as opposed to simply just, you know, targeting that we're just going to fund more people. If the Minister could just kind of comment on that a little bit.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think that this is an exciting time because we are in the process of combining all of our arts funding within ITI, and I think what -- and my vision of doing this is being able to bring all of these funding opportunities together to a one-stop shop. And it also allows us to have conversation -- like, more fulsome conversations about what it is that artists need. And I think I've said in this House before that having sat through some of the art strategy engagement in 2019, I heard a lot of the same things that I heard as a 5-year-old sitting through art strategy type engagements with my mother back in the day with a lot of the same players and advocates sitting around the table and still asking for some of the same things, and so I think this is an opportunity to bring those voices together, bring the funding together, and be able to look at opportunities to stack that funding together, and within the arts council funding as well comes a position in order to look at just that. How do we take this funding and actually extrapolate it and grow it so that we are increasing the opportunities for artists within the territory? Because I don't think there's a single person in this room that would disagree on the absolute value of art across our territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The next thing I wanted to chat about is just the contributions part, advancing the knowledge economy. So they've got a hundred thousand set for that this year. I note that they've cut it a little bit from the past. And can the Minister kind of describe what the department -- the department's understanding of what advancing knowledge economy means and particularly how it relates to, you know -- yeah, just that comment alone. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, you know, I think

that I spent a tremendous amount of time in the last term actually looking up knowledge economy and trying to figure out what people actually meant. So I hear the Member in that kind of the piece in there about really it means something slightly different to everybody else, but my understanding of it is essentially a system where production of goods and services is based on research and innovation and development of product in our territory. And I think the really neat thing about the Northwest Territories is you're able to really even hone in on bridging our western and traditional sciences in that as well. So I think it's a pretty neat one here. But for more detail on our innovation action plan and our knowledge economy pieces, I'd like to pass to the deputy minister.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In follow-up to the Minister's comments, yes, the knowledge economy has, you know, evolved into the innovation action plan, and we are still very actively working on this. I'm happy to report that there's been a new development called the NWT Innovation Collective, which was launched in January of 2024 in partnership with Wilfred Laurier University, and it brings together government, academia, and industry, and we believe this will be a really important partnership to move a lot of the actions forward. Some of the areas that, you know, we think are going to be key here are creating microclusters, such as in the agriculture sector and potentially also the manufacturing sector. So those are our areas that we're looking at. And, for example, there is microcluster funding from ISET in the federal government being administered through some NGOs that could be beneficial for those two areas. So that work will advance. It's still in its infancy, but that is what we're looking towards having really be leading this work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the department for that answer. I actually -- I really appreciate that one, and I'm quite excited to hear what's happening in that regard.

You know, last but not least, this one's just a comment for the record, but kind of build upon what my colleague was talking about with the economic vision and the, you know, increased investment and diversification that we were talking about, something that the Member from Yellowknife North has spoken about a fair bit,

and I completely agree with, is just that when we're talking about economic diversification, I think that we need to be focusing on strategic things that we can be doing, things that are actually going to advance diversification in the territory and we have evidence to support those as opposed to simply thinking of diversification as something where we just invest in everything and we try to grow everything that's happening. So I'm hoping that the vision that we develop is going to help us do that. I would just kind of add to the Member for Great Slave's encouragement to the department, I think this is something that I'd like to see us get in place soon. Let's say before we're more than halfway through the term of this Assembly, I'd like to see us really prioritize this, get it done quickly so that can start helping us kind of strategically target our actions. You know, the fact that we don't have the plan in place now does concern me, and so I think we need to be kind of thinking about -- yeah, I'd just like to see us get it done quickly as opposed to this be something that's finished, you know, say, by the end of the term because we've got big challenges we're facing, and we need to be targeted in how we're addressing them. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I took that as a comment but very happy to respond to it.

We often hear about the need to diversify our economy in the Northwest Territories, and we certainly do already have a very diverse economy, and when we look at, you know, where to go tomorrow and what opportunities sit before us, I agree with the Member that we have a tremendous amount of areas in the North that have the ability to grow and the ability to flourish and that we need to take stock of what our assets are and where we're going to get the biggest return on our investment as we go forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Before I go to the next Member here, I just want to just -- I just want to ask Members to be mindful that we have the Minister here and Members here speaking, if there's Members that want to speak to their colleagues, they could just maybe step outside briefly and then come back in.

So next on my list here I got the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** I think you mean a different lake, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Got to change these riding names, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to talk about the film industry rebate program. This is a really good program, and I support it fully, and I think the film strategy has come a very long way and it always has a lot of success. But it's succeeding in a very -- like, it's scratching the surface of our potential. And I think the key is this rebate program and at this point, I think it's the -- the funding is useful for those kind of small northern driven films which deserve to be supported, but we're never going to see production companies choose to base their productions here for the money alone when it's funded to this degree. Is there -- and what I mean by that is, you know, our natural beauty and the uniqueness of the setting brings people here. They choose the Northwest Territories because it's spectacular, but they don't come here because of the film credit. So is there a way we can take our natural advantage of being a spectacular destination for filming and bump this rebate up so we can start to see more productions come here and all the benefits that come from that, all the economic spinoffs and multiply our job creation, the industries that grow up around it as well. I know firsthand that this could be incredibly transformative, especially for small communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Chair, I appreciate the Member bringing this up, the multipliers within the film industry in the Northwest Territories are absolutely incredible, and so being able to capitalize on that is definitely worth our investment for sure. For that reason, in this budget from Main Estimate 2023-2024 and Main Estimate 2024-2025, you do see an increase in the film rebate program of \$400,000, and there is future increases to come as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. And my apologies if I'm not up to date with the current strategy, but what is the plan -- like, what's the ceiling for the rebate? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just give me a moment here on these contributions for film rebate program. Here we are.

So in the 2024-2025, our contributions there are \$500,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Apologies, Mr. Chair. I meant where is it going? Like the the Minister said, it's expected to go beyond 500K, so I'm just wondering what the thinking is, like how high is this going; is it going to be a million dollar fund at some point or multimillion dollar, or are we going to keep it kind of -- is it an incremental increase to, like, 600K? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, in 2024-2025, the main estimates are \$500,000 investment for the contributions for the film rebate program. And in the following year for 2025-2026, the investment would go up another \$500,000 to \$1 million investment. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Nothing further. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Next on my list here I got the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Here it says, okay, advanced knowledge economy. You know, 2022-2023, well, that program went down, the money went down in the community feature, community initiative and support for entrepreneur and economic development.

We all know that we need to grow our economy, and with GNWT fiscal restraint and mine closing, we really do need the economy. So I just want to know what is the government doing to help our -- especially in the small communities, because we lack a lot of resources and our unemployment rate is really high and many of these programs are supporting small communities and some of the small communities residents use these funds, you know, with their business venture. So I just wanted to know if -- what kind of a relationship does the Minister have with local organizations or Indigenous government for entrepreneur and economic development in these small communities?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in regards to the question specifically about community transfer initiatives that the Member did ask about, I just wanted to first respond to that question. So that

question there is an underspend of the vacant economic development officer positions, and so -- and those positions that have traditionally been vacant are in Fort Liard, the Sahtu, and in Tuktoyaktuk. And so however the community transfer initiatives funding does provide about 13 and a half positions through Indigenous governments, especially in our small communities, and those are economic development funding positions that play a role of helping people set up businesses and enter into passive entrepreneurship.

In addition, Mr. Chair, there's also, for example, programs like SEED which is a program that people who are wanting to jump into entrepreneurship can take advantage of. And there are also programs that are supportive, with my other ECE hat on as well. If somebody wants to start a business, there is programming called the self-employment fund, which I think, unfortunately, not a ton of people know about, but also supports people as they're starting their own businesses.

Across the territory, Mr. Chair, ITI does contribute over \$10 million across programs like community futures, community transfer initiatives, SEED funding, through their sustainable Canadian agriculture program and also the northern food development program. So there's a tremendous amount of funding and programming that does go into the Northwest Territories.

And what I would say to MLAs and to anybody who does want to start a business is please either reach out to your MLA or to your regional staff with ITI, because there are people who want to be able to create these pathways and help people figure out where they fit within these funding programs. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Yes, this sustainable community agriculture partnership, I know at one time that's -- that was, I think -- well, with the high cost of living, we really do need more of this kind of programs and I know -- so this was a bilateral agreement between federal and GNWT, so I'm just wondering if the Minister -- or are they going to try and find a program similar to this so to offset our high cost of living in the North? I know Hay River had -- they were training some of our young people before, you know, with lots of -- with agriculture. So I just wanted to know if there's going to be more of this kind of program in the near future. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the line item that's towards the top of the page, the Canadian Agriculture Partnership, the GNWT was able to renegotiate that deal and it resulted in actually an increase which is now found at the very bottom of the page under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership. And that agreement is to the tune of \$7.6 million over the lifetime of the agreement, and you can see here that it has gone up from the -- what was allotted under the Canadian Agriculture Partnership. So for 2024-2025, it's sitting just over \$1.5 million. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. For 2022-2023, there was nothing. So I missed that one. So that's okay. There was another one too. I had another question here. No, it is okay, that's it for this page. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Support for entrepreneur and economic development here. For 2023-2024, it was \$5,241,000. I know that's probably related to the fire and the floods, and this year for 2024-2025, you estimate 3.4. Why? Because we're -- you know, the report is that this year it's going to be dry and hot summer. I mean, we haven't seen it yet still but, you know -- and it's just that why the budget cut because I know this benefit a lot of other local businesses. I know a lot of businesses, they helped last year with this, so I just wanted to know why there's, you know, a major cut in that area.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the Member's love for this program; I share it. I think it's definitely ITI's cornerstone -- well, one of their major cornerstone offerings to residents of the Northwest Territories. So the major changes there that we're seeing from one year to the next is the previous year had \$1 million in CanNor funding for operational support to businesses affected by the wildfire evacuation, and so that was dollars given to the GNWT that directly went to businesses from there for wildfire relief for businesses that were evacuated. And then in addition to that, Regular Members in the previous Assembly also negotiated SEED funding specific for arts to the tune of \$375,000, and that was negotiated as part of budget negotiations for one year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.



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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I'm surprised she said that because we got to sustain our economy, and economic development is important for the NWT. So that's why -- and especially in small communities with high unemployment rate, so that's why I'm asking, you know, especially within this area, because it does affect us too. We have constituents that benefit from these programs. So it's more of a comment. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, they were natural sunsets of the program. So those dollars weren't put in on an ongoing recurring basis. One of them was monies that were afforded to us through CanNor specifically for wildfire relief, and then the other one was a one-year arrangement that was negotiated as part of budget negotiations in a previous government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. There's no further questions? Thank you. I'm going to continue on now to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my question's around the Great Northern Arts Festival. I know the Minister knows how important this festival is to the community of Inuvik and to the Northwest Territories. I note that I believe the answer is that the funding was deferred, but I just wanted to get -- sorry, moved to another department. I just wanted to get that on record, Mr. Chair, that the \$25,000 for the Great Northern Arts Festival is still available. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I share the Member's love of the Great Northern Arts Festival and would like to see it continue. It is still funded within ITI, but the funding comes out of the SEED funding.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. There's no further questions? I want to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'm looking at all these different programs within this activity and listening to the Minister making compliments of diversification and supports. It's

all good. And I look forward to -- and my presentation's more of a comment, Mr. Chair.

The Minister had mentioned that we had wildfire relief. Now we got to design low water relief. So I look forward to, as for our statement -- or my statement here to the Minister, how to design from this package of programs to design a low water relief for the Sahtu businesses? I'm constantly getting texts already on complimenting what was said because I share the Minister's support on all government approach to the clients back in the Sahtu. So I'm glad to hear that, and I'm also glad to see the various supports of these various programs that go to that problem, and I look forward to negotiating a relief package designed for these clients back home there with the Minister and this department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll take that as more of a comment, and I'll continue on. On page 238, are there any further questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've been talking about building our economy in our committees and their deliberations. It's important that we help build our economy within each community, within each region, as a territory as a whole, but when you look at these SEED programs, the advance -- I mean, the community futures, all these programs have had a decrease in these areas where it's giving -- where it states community. It's very disturbing to see these cuts in these areas where it supports community initiatives. Can you give me some clarity on that, please. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, some of these are reductions due to duplications in programs within the department, and some of them are sunsets of programming as well. Some of them are also vacant positions within the department that have -- and some of them are -- there is also some fiscal sustainability in there as well. But the -- sorry, the duplications that you're finding in the department, what we are doing is trying to focus a lot of the funding through SEED and really looking at with what is it that communities are looking for, what is it that they want to do, and then how can we simply get funding to community members and work with communities in order to see their economic development goals go through rather than trying to get people to fit into different funding pots across the board. So unless, of course, it is a federal funding pot in which case we are

required to use those different programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go back to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** I'm just looking at what my colleague from Inuvik Boot Lake just stated was the Great Northern Arts Festival. We have a festival that's affiliated with the community of Fort McPherson, the Midway Lake community -- I mean, the Midway Lake Music Festival. Has this organization ever made a proposal to your department for funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, anybody who would like to be able to kind of travel that same road and put in an application to have their festival funded within the program would need to put in an application under the community economic development stream. So I would encourage anybody to go through and do that for sure. And if they want support in order to do that, they can go to their regional director -- or sorry, regional office, and our regions will definitely work with communities across the board in order to see what kind of funding can be sourced. Thank you.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Okay. No, my question was I'm looking for funding for Midway Lake. Has the organization ever approached your department or regional department for funding in the past? I'm just wondering if that's something that this organization has ever pursued. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have that level of detail with me here today as far as who may have applied for it, but I'd be happy to pull that information for the Member and get back to him, for sure.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One last question, what's the criteria for some organization, like, that's applying for -- may want to apply for funding; what's the criteria? Do they have to be affiliated to a society of some sort? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, there's multiple streams. There's streams that are for people who are sole proprietors that own their own business. There's streams for organizations. There's streams -- a multitude of different streams. There's streams for Indigenous governments. And so my suggestion would absolutely be for people to reach out to their regional office if they have a project that they would like to see go forward, an event, or especially if somebody has an economic development idea they'd love the support of seeing through.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member of Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** When somebody applies for funding from your department in this area, do they have to provide a financial report? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it would depend on what exactly they were asking for, the amount they're asking for, and what stream of the program they're entering into. So, for example, somebody who's a sole proprietor that would like to be able to access SEED dollars in order to kind of propel their business and see it evolve would be expected to provide quotes for what it is that they're looking for and also, you know, an indication of their own equity that they want to put into the project as well. So I would say it really depends on what it is that they are looking to do. But there are streams that speak to multiple organizations and individuals across the territory. The goal here is to try and help people evolve their business ideas and support them to see economic development and also arts across the territory evolve and flourish.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just give you an example, the Great Northern Arts Festival, use them as an example, if they wanted to put in a proposal for a grant to -- for this festival here, would they have to provide a financial report after their festival is completed?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for all of our

contribution agreements within the Department of ITI, we always have a reporting mechanism, so yes.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** I'm fine. 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. Chairperson. I was looking at the agriculture -- Canadian Agriculture Partnership. You had \$1,051,000 in 2022-2023, and then you had nothing after that. Then it looks like you went into the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership. Okay, so do we have a huge agriculture sector in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I can honestly say that when I travelled to the South Slave not that long ago, agriculture was the topic that came up the most often when we were down there. So just for a summary of allocations to regions, if the Member is interested, from the SCAP allocations for 2023-2024, we had \$230,000 to the Beau-Del; \$120,000 to the Sahtu; \$200,000 to the Deh Cho, \$364,000 to the South Slave; \$330,000 to the North Slave; and \$340,000 to the headquarters region here for a total of 1.584 -- well, \$1.5 million, just over. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** That's pretty -- it's growing. It's a grower sector that is becoming successful. So, yeah, that's what I wanted to know. How many people are -- or how many programs in -- so I'm trying to figure out what -- how many programs per region are there? Is it people are applying at every community, or is it certain communities? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have a list that is community specific. But just to give an idea of some of the things that the funds are going toward, there are -- there's everything from research project to infrastructure investment, local markets, community-based growing initiatives, community garden wages, business plans, community planning processes, educational initiatives, school

gardens, and even training events. So it's a real broad range of where people are investing in this market and this area. There's a ton of potential across the territory, especially in the Deh Cho region. And so there's real great opportunity. Even here based in Yellowknife, there is the agrifoods association who is also doing a lot of outreach and a lot of support to people from different regions to see how they can come together and really support one another, and this past year had their first conference here in town which was very well attended. This was even people from Europe that came over and presented that are growing another circumpolar regions. You know, even over in Alaska people came over here to talk about how they're doing it and what they're doing and even people from the Yukon. So there's a lot of opportunity and a lot of interest in food sustainability here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** That's good. I'm happy to hear that. And that's a good news story from ITI supporting people and supporting the communities. So continue to do that because we're going to need a lot of that. So thank you so much. And that's it for questions.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my first question is about Prosper NWT. And so it looks like the budget has been reduced by about 24 percent between last year's budget and this year's budget. Can the Minister explain what's happening there or the rationale behind that? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, that was part of our fiscal sustainability reduction and our ask that Prosper NWT look at different options as to how to create more sustainability within the organization with less investment from the GNWT. And so I am working with Prosper NWT, with their board as well, to figure out what the future looks like and how they can continue to provide great service to businesses across the territory. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, thank you for that. That's good to know. My next question is about the dramatic increase in economic diversification

overall funding, and it looks like it's related to contract services. Can the Minister explain what in particular can be attributed to -- well, actually, it was an increase in last year's revised estimates that continued on to this year's main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the primary driver of that is the Hay River fish plant. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. And that is -- certainly, I think, fisheries are an important industry that we don't want to lose sight of. But probably a whole other conversation in and of itself that I won't get into now.

My next question, so the SEED program -- well, the first question -- I know that there's going to be an incorporation of arts funding all into ITI. Is the arts funding that used to be done through ECE all to come out of SEED funding, or is it coming out of somewhere else in this line? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the arts funding from ECE is still seen in the main estimates under ECE for this year. So currently what's happening is the planning of how to do that amalgamation. So you won't see any of those dollars that used to be in ECE in ITI. They are still located in the Education, Culture and Employment main estimates at this time. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, thank you for that. That is -- that's a relief. I was especially concerned seeing SEED funding go down quite a bit, wondering if we're piling more and more things under that umbrella, how we're going to sustain all these initiatives. But that's good to know.

My last question, in response to a previous question, the deputy minister talked about microclusters in agriculture and manufacturing. And I've seen that term a few times also in the business plans around -- I think it's microclusters of housing. I'm not familiar with this term microclusters, and I wonder if you could explain when you say you're looking at microclusters, what does that mean?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, microclusters are these basically, like, individual business entities that kind of grow and generate themselves within different communities. So, for example, you know, if I travelled to community X, Y, Z, and they're saying, you know, we're really interested in getting agriculture going, we really see the potential, and that starts to generate and you end up with this microcluster of an agriculture industry within that one community that grows and supports itself and evolves from there, and Hay River is a great example of that where, you know, you've got a lot on the go in this community, everything from eggs to wheat to berry trees and all the rest of it. So there's a lot of really neat things going on. And so they're essentially economic hubs that occur in our communities. And I think one of the things that's really important about those is they end up being resident driven, which is what you need, really, in order to have a successful business; you need that heart and hustle. And so if the residents are driving that economic hub or that economic microcluster, the chances of it succeeding are way, way greater than if, you know, somebody else is deciding for a community what their industry is going to be. I think it's really important that where people want to put their time and their energy and their sweat and -- their blood, sweat, and tears, so to say, it need to be personally driven by community members for it to succeed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you for that. So I'm still not clear what ITI or the GNWT's role in that is, but that could be a further conversation. But my final question, so one of the specific actions that ITI has in its business plan to support housing is connecting economic analysis of the housing sector to determine whether an industry led microcluster could be fostered for the NWT Housing sector I suppose as a whole. Can you explain what exactly that would involve? I don't really understand what that action is at all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you for your final question. To the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, one of the things that I have learned very quickly about ITI is ITI is very much a connector department, and so it plays a very strong role with connecting other departments within the GNWT,

connecting, you know, grassroots, organic funding like the SEED program, to other funding mechanisms through CanNor and such, by connecting smaller grassroots programming -- or funding programs, like manufacturing funding, SEED funding, you know, even if it's an agriculture microcluster, for example, you've got the SCAP funding. But when it comes to housing, if you have a community who really wants to play a vital role -- and I mean, there are communities represented here who have approached me about doing, for example, trades programming in order -- in their home community in order to facilitate building housing, and so now all of a sudden, you've got ITI that is acting as a connector between multiple departments, between multiple funding entities, whether it's through federal government or even just the GNWT and then private sector that are bringing those together and creating essentially a housing hub or a housing microcluster in communities. And so whether or not that is for a specific part of housing or if it is seeing a housing project just for that community from start to finish, there's great opportunities for ITI to continue to play that role and to really play the connector piece on how do we start that's industries and really see them flourish by bringing all those funding pieces together.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Okay, we're going to -- is there any further questions? No, don't see no hands. Okay, no further questions. Please turn to page 235.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$20,897,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We will take a short 30-minute break now, and we'll come back. So that will give a chance to give the translators an opportunity to rest. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Okay, thank you. Moving on to minerals and petroleum resources beginning on page 239 with information items on page 234. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm being blinded by, like, a beam of miraculous light here.

My question on this one, I believe that this division -- well, I guess the first question just to make sure I'm getting -- I'm in the right spot

here, but this division deals with remediation employment opportunities and mining employment opportunities in the NWT, is that correct?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. Can the Member be more specific about what he's looking for. At ITI, we don't do mine training, per se, you know, as ECE might, and don't have mining positions, but this is the section that houses our Pathfinders if that's what the Member is looking for.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Yeah, thank you. No, I'm not really speaking to the pathfinder program. And maybe I'll give a little bit more detail so the Minister can understand what I'm getting at. So there's been quite a bit of talk in the past little while about the opportunities that mine remediation has for employment in the territory and just ensuring that we are capturing the benefits from this activity, but namely, the Giant Mine remediation project was going to be -- you know, it's upwards of \$4 million now that's going to be spent in the territory. And my question is if this is the department to be asking questions about those opportunities and who is overseeing them?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yes, ITI is a partner in that, and the lead on that is ECC from the GNWT's perspective. Thank you.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Okay, thank you. So this is news to me, I didn't realize this. So ECE is involved in dealing with the employment opportunities for mine remediation for Northerners?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, yes, ECE is the lead on the Giant Mine remediation project partnership with the federal government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'm going to go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Okay, thank you. That's interesting, it kind of counters my

understanding. I was under the impression that with relation to employment opportunities, ITI was playing a role. I understand there's some kind of coordination committee related to it that ITI is partnering in. So I wanted to ask about that, how it's going, how the department sees itself in that role with relation to the fact that, you know, this department also has a division that's managing economic diversification and maximizing opportunities there. So I was hoping to ask questions about that. So maybe the department can clarify a little bit, like the role that they are playing in this system, particularly related to capturing the economic benefits from this activity.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, yes, ITI/ECE does play a role along with ECC. ECC is the role. And for kind of the operational way that that looks within ITI, I would like to pass it to the deputy minister. Thank you.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So further to what the Minister spoke about, every kind of project we put together, the partners that need to be on it, so specifically on Giant Mine, although it is an ECC lead, ITI and ECE participate on the socio-economic advisory board, but it's multi-stakeholder. So it has IGs, Canada, GNWT departments, and the city of Yellowknife. Other projects, like the remediation economy for example, there's a project that has federal SPIDE funding, and that one is led by CIRNAC. They're working with the college and ECE on, you know, doing training, specifically for example, for the Deline Great Bear Lake opportunity and Norman Wells. And then we have our socio-economic agreements where, yes, we track employment and we work with ECE and HSS on those. So all a it different but, yeah, you're right, we have our hands on, you know, ensuring that the resource projects, you know, do hire locally and we do the best to coordinate how we achieve that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we are starting to get to the bottom of it here. And I appreciate that, that clarifying information. So now speaking to the particularly the socio-economic and the program that the deputy minister just mentioned, can she kind of describe what the department is doing to

maximize benefits to Northerners from that project in particular and remediation in general.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will pass it to the deputy minister to provide detailed information about that.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make sure that I understood quickly if I haven't covered that the Member would like, please let us know. But with respect to the Giant Mine remediation project, ITI did complete a procurement review of what monies were spent in northern and Indigenous NWT businesses contracted by parsons. We found that there was strong overall performance with about 65 percent of those dollars going to NWT Indigenous and NWT businesses. And that number's ranged from 56 to 76 percent overall. And largely, the dollars that are going south are southern contracts that aren't available in the North. The work we do is working with companies to right size those contracts. For example, we met with Diavik on Friday last and talked about their closure, and it's a big contract, and how can they right size and break those contracts down to make northern firms able to bid on them. And that's the work they're doing right now. We know, for example, De Beers at Gahcho Kue has been very successful at breaking down the contracts. So I hope that answered the Member's statement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you. And, yeah, I think this is one that I want to kind of maybe follow up with the department a bit more sort of outside of the budget deliberations. I just wanted to get some questions on the floor about it. But I am interested in learning more about what the department's doing, how it's capturing the benefits. This one's important to me. But I'll leave my questions on this budget item as that for now. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask about the mining incentive program. What was the subscription rate for the program last fiscal year? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the subscription rate for the program, we have a budget of \$1.5 million, and in 2022-2023 our actuals were \$1.274 million. So while each year the program is fully subscribed, what ends up happening is there are monies that companies are not able to spend. Sometimes it can be due to, for example, wildfires. And they end up having to hand that money back to ITI. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that -- maybe I framed it wrong, but how the applications -- or the dollar amount of applications were -- came in for the program last fiscal year, so not the actuals, but the number -- or how much money was applied for. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Sorry, my apologies, Mr. Chair. I misunderstood the question from the Member. So the total funding request was \$2.678 million. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. And what is the economic -- or the department's analysis of economic multipliers related to this funding? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. It's 8 to 1. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. That seems like a very good return on investment. Since the -- when was the fund increased to \$1.5 million? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Sorry, just a sec, please, Mr. Chair.

Why don't I pull that information and provide it to the Member? I'm fairly certain that it was within the life of the 19th Assembly where it was slightly increased. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Yeah, I think that's correct. I think it's probably 500K that went in in the 19th because it was increased to a million in the 18th Assembly. So given that there is quite a bit of interest in this fund, given that it's at times an economic multiplier, and that it hasn't been increased for some time, why isn't the Minister seeking an increase to this fund at a time when we need to get the exploration projects moving quickly to take advantage of the critical -- the interest in critical minerals and the significant amount of funding that's out there for critical minerals projects and that we're going to see, you know, a substantial local spend from this money. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I agree with the Member that we definitely want to put our fund where we have high return on investment. That said, there is a significant amount of interest in the Northwest Territories right now at a time where we are also working to be fiscally responsible within the GNWT. And so, you know, we will certainly continue to assess the program as we go throughout the life of this Assembly, but also ensure that we are really riding on and encouraging further momentum. I don't think that at the end of the day this is going to make our break somebody's decision to invest in the territory. I do think it is a help but I think, though, that some of the other work that we're doing as far as, you know, bilaterals with myself and the Minister of ECE and work with the federal government may stand to go to get us there as well and to help us continue to move forward. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. No, I think our resource speaks for itself, and the regulatory environment is certainly -- or regulatory improvements is certainly welcome and one of the issues that needs to be addressed. But access to capital is another one. So any -- I think every -- and any dollar that goes towards building a stronger economy through resource development is a benefit, and when you have -- I know we're in fiscal restraint, so we have to make wise use of our dollars. And, again, a times eight multiplier is a significant -- significantly good return on investment. So I would strongly encourage the Minister to bump this funding up as much as she can with -- in short, well, as soon as she can granted she's not in charge of supplementary appropriations but she -- I'll put in a good word for her department with the Minister of Finance.

Turning to another area of resource development, petroleum resources. Are there any petroleum projects on the horizon with the shuttering of Norman Wells soon -- or the winding down of operations in Norman Wells? Of course, we don't get any of those royalties as a territorial government, but is there any interest in petroleum resources in the Northwest Territories that the department is aware of and planning for? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is interest. There is the M18 up in IRC region. There's also conversation in regards to the offshore accord. And there is also some really unique research projects that are going on right now in the Northwest Territories through the carbon capture, so carbon sequestration in the territory where we have a type of rock essentially in the territory, up in the Beaufort Delta, that can take carbon dioxide that is a by-product of the processing of this material. So there's some really neat stuff going on. There is also meetings happening this week with companies that are building awareness on LNG happening in Calgary at the global energy show. So this is definitely an area that ITI is very much involved in and is also working with Indigenous governments and different regions within the territory to work together to see where this is going to go. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you for that. And I think as much as I appreciate the other areas of the department working on economic diversification, there's only so many people working in the Northwest Territories that can ever be working in the Northwest Territories, and these resource projects are always going to deliver the biggest economic activity, the biggest bang for our buck, because we just simply can't compete with larger jurisdictions with significant workforces or substantial enough workforces to fuel the whole economy. So mining, of course, has a robust presence. There's plenty of low carbon opportunities with the minerals industry that are being seized right now, especially around critical minerals. So I think petroleum resources and energy resources can somehow feel lost in the shuffle of that because they're, of course -- they create plenty of emissions that we are trying to tamp down on.

So it's -- but I like to hear about these things just for those who are interested in these

other -- you know, in the many petroleum resources and energy resources we have in the Northwest Territories that there is a plan for them. So thank you for that update. Please increase the mining incentive program. Nothing further. Thank you.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my question's around the scientific collaborative research projects. Given that Inuvik obviously is a research hub, a lot of research is actively done through the Aurora Research Institute up there, and it also provides an economic benefit for Inuvik and the region as well. I note in 2022-2023, there was \$403,000 spent. I'm wondering why it's been reduced to \$150,000 this year. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the difference in the main estimates come from a decrease of total of \$200,000. So the first bit of that is \$150,000 that is fiscal sustainability reduction. So what we're looking at here is rather than funding research for everything that kind of comes through our doors, really looking at making sure that we are funding collaborative research projects that speak to the priorities and goals of the Northwest Territories because a lot of these are driven by universities down south and might not be aligned with what we're wanting to research.

So one of the examples we talk about is rather than just researching a rock because it is pink, researching the rock that helps get to where we want to be tomorrow.

The next piece of that is a sunset of \$50,000 in CanNor funding that was accessed for assessing NWT geological materials for cement production. So it was, like, a pre-feasibility study done on that. Thank you.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** I guess -- thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess specifically, I mean, I know a lot of research is being done around permafrost degradation in my region around the -- as the Minister said, around the geoscience, around the knowledge economy, and around the mineral and petroleum potential in that region, particularly around the petroleum potential. So I guess my question is does the Minister feel that that will have a negative impact on the



amount of research programs now happening -- ability for research programs to happen at the Aurora research institute, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, no. And the reason for that is what we're looking at doing is continuing to use this funding but to leverage it to source other funding mechanisms, for example through CanNor as well. There is even a permafrost project that is on the go just outside of Yellowknife here as well. And so there's a ton of opportunity. And not only with CanNor but also with Enercan to be able to combine our budgets together in order to do more. And so that's what this is looking at is how can we use what we have in order to leverage additional funding from the federal government. And there's a tremendous amount of research to be done in the Northwest Territories because we all know we are at the forefront of change that's happening around the world. Thank you.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And that's good to hear. Thank you very much. One other -- just a quick comment. I know the mineral and petroleum resources -- sorry, petroleum resources, I think it was a director position was in Inuvik. That position, the person who was filling that position relocated to Yellowknife and is now actually, I think, in an ADM position. Has that position been filled in Inuvik and is there still plans to fill that position there? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have that level of information. But I'm going to look to my colleagues here. And can I pass it to the deputy minister. Thank you.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, yes, there was one director of minerals and one director of petroleum. And minerals and petroleum were merged into the minerals director which was located in Yellowknife. We maintained all of the other positions in Inuvik with a manager of petroleum resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to clarify, because I know there was no reduction of full-time positions in the Beaufort Delta region, so I guess that obviously was likely amalgamated in the previous year, and did that result in a reduction of a position at ITI in Inuvik, or is that position still -- the manager's position is now filling that role?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Further to the Member's question, no, that was not a change that occurred in these main estimates. And I'd like to pass it back to the deputy minister.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Yes, I believe that that amalgamation of the two was the 18th Legislative Assembly, and then the position from the petroleum director is now the director of mineral -- Mineral Resources Act implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you. And that position is located in Inuvik or Yellowknife?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yellowknife.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you. Okay, thank you. I appreciate that. It's unfortunate certainly given that likely anything we do with petroleum, particularly around obviously as this House has heard me say, around the trillions of cubic feet of natural gas we have in our region, the fact that we have a natural gas production facility getting ready to come on stream in the next couple of years in our region, certainly would be great if we felt that ITI had beefed up the staff in that region as well to coincide with this work being done and hopefully to look at work that's going to be done in the future as this program -- as this project that IRC are doing continues to bear fruit, as you would, and have some senior positions in there for that. I would accept an ADM if that's the Minister would like to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, one of the things that is pretty clear about ITI is it's a smaller department with a ton of creative people who like to do as much as they can with limited funds within the department, because it does do a lot and a tremendous of their funding does go out for grants and contributions. One of the things that they are undergoing right now is doing the Mineral Resources Act implementation, and part of that work is going to be to have to redo the job descriptions that are required in order to fully implement that Act and some of the changes that will come from the staffing to be able to respond to that. And I -- and my point in that is that there are always changes that occur within our economic opportunities within the Northwest Territories. I absolutely hear the Member, and I don't see this as a stagnant department who is not fluid or willing to evolve as the sectors evolve in the territory. And I think you see that through the work that they're doing with the MRA right now. And so I definitely see some evolutions of staffing as we go forward within the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And certainly by no means was I implying that the wonderful staff that we have there aren't doing the work now. I'm in touch with them regularly, and certainly we have a good crew there, and I appreciate what they do. And so I will leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there a willingness in the near future on this department to issue a rights issuance for oil and gas in the territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like to pass to the deputy minister.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Certainly it's -- thank you, Mr. Chair. It's been a while since we've done a call for bids. It's always, always open, but, you know, certainly we can try that. In light of the, you know, export LNG opportunity in Inuvik, there could be some interest knowing

that that feasibility is very promises. You know, one of the comments we always get is just the infrastructure issue, if anything is, you know, further inland. But, yes, we could definitely look at that. But if we do put that out, we want to be successful. And so, you know, right now nothing stops if a company has interest, they can definitely be applying for those petroleum lands. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks for the response to that there, deputy minister. And my other question is that I participated in a virtual led by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board on the many sumps that -- waste sumps that are out there on the land in the Sahtu. So they're doing an inventory similar to what they did in the Beaufort Delta, and it'll help diversify our economy by creating this clean-up. So I would suggest the department, if they want to reach out to the Sahtu Renewable Resource Board in Tulita, to see how they can help. If you got a big sump that's out there that's left prior to legislation not allowing those anymore, it'll create some winter seasonal access jobs to recap these sumps. By legislation, you need a meter cap on top of these sumps, so you'd be hauling some material there. So that'll be the economics in compliance with the sumps out there. And you have the well watch program with OROGO, so maybe ITI could take a lead in partnership with OROGO to initiate those discussions. Maybe even having a one-on-one meeting in Tulita with the Sahtu Renewable Resource Board. So that's a suggestion.

And getting back to the remediation opportunities that is going to be coming, I would also suggest the department to participate into the opportunities, and maybe even go one step further and updating the report that was done on the remediation economy back in the 19th Assembly, to identify what is not identified in that study or in that report. I think this whole remediation economy is really on the verge of a prosperous project throughout the whole territories.

And to give you an example on the magnitude, the magnitude of the Norman Wells clean-up, it hasn't really been identified to what scale it actually is because there never was a subsurface geotechnical study done. The whole purpose of drafting your scope for clean-up would be to identify the depth in the area of the clean-up itself, and once you know how deep it is and what the surface area is, that'll give you an area of impact as to what the remediation plan should do to address that area. And it's going to be huge. It's going to be

huge. And you think we have to prepare for that. As everybody knows it's called a nonrenewable resource for those reasons. It's not renewable. So it's going to require the clean-up. Sure, the Esso -- Esso company has taken a lead role in filing their closure and reclamation plan similar to Diavik, but Diavik seems to be one more step ahead by having collaboration. But it seems like with Imperial, they're not. So maybe this department could help in that area.

And then once the identified opportunities are in place, how do we prepare our workforce for those opportunities? And it seems like, you know, in every jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories, aside from the Sahtu, there is some level of activity there. Like, I respect the fact that Inuvik has a knowledge economy and a research institute, which is very important to the science collected by that office. But that's just an example of what they have, and we don't have, so to speak. So I think we have to -- as the Minister said, we have to look at what we have and where we're going to go and design a scope accordingly to help diversify our economy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll take that as information. Are there any further questions? Okay, I'm going to go the Member from YK Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to build off in a different direction than my colleague for Inuvik Boot Lake and on the last question or the last matter he raised.

Mr. Chairman, I think in some ways, maybe, the question should be what trigger or what needs to change to reestablish those positions there? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, right now we're evaluating I guess to start off with what are the immediate needs of the department. The immediate needs right now of the department are to implement the Mineral Resources Act, and the big piece of that is the regulation work. So that is the primary focus and the primary, I guess, driver of funding right now, getting that done is going to be huge for the territory and has a huge focus. But we are constantly assessing what positions are in high demand and high need within the department and ensuring that we can essentially pivot to accommodate those and to accommodate the demands of the territory to make sure we are being responsive in the economic environment that we are currently in. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Yellowknife Centre Member.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd say thanks for the answer, but I'm not really sure -- I appreciate the answer, but it doesn't really focus on what the issue is, is what needs to change in order to reestablish the position there. All of that work could be done there. So is there something holding back from being able to do that work in Inuvik? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's no secret that in this Assembly, there is a huge desire to have conversations about what positions can be placed within communities and outside of the capital city. And that is work that will be done over the course of the next year, and so I can assure the Member that it is a live conversation within the department. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, how many people are currently working in that office in Inuvik? Because I was there on the weekend. Although it was the weekend, so it was closed, but the sign sticks out like a sore thumb.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. There are five people. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Yellowknife Centre Member.

**MR. HAWKINS:** And how many people support that office in terms of employment or PYs? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** How many -- well, I would say that a -- everybody works together and supports one another. There's five staff specifically within the mineral resources petroleum sector. Sorry, could the Member be more specific about what exactly he's looking for. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Does the office work in isolation by itself as a nuclear unit, or does it

have a support team that it works day to day with, say, like, for example, a specific division in headquarters?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Member for the clarification. So the mineral and petroleum resources office that's there has five staff. They work in concert with the mineral and petroleum resources division that is based in Yellowknife, and they also have close working relationships with the regional office as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Not intending to hold you to the exact number unless of course you have it, so how many people would that represent? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** We're looking for then is the number of staff in the Inuvik regional office. The office -- it's the MPR office itself in Inuvik, and that whole division at headquarters as well? Just to clarify, please, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Member for Yellowknife Centre to help clarify that.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Oh, that's okay. I mean, what I'm getting at is there's a big division there, and it seems like five people are there, and they're working with a bunch of people. And I would almost go to say is would the Minister agree that policy and regulations could be worked on, designed, reviewed, and talked about anywhere in the Northwest Territories?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Chair, I think I've already identified that this work is already underway. I think the Member knows the answer to his question, and I absolutely value what he is getting at here, and he is getting at that he would like to see more positions in communities, and I understand that. In addition, there's also a remote work policy as well that I hope that we as a government can use. I can also speak to the fact that ITI is also in the process of using that for positions that were traditionally in Yellowknife and people wanted to be able to work from communities, and so I

would like to take the opportunity to kind of celebrate them in that respect, that they're willing to work with this policy in order to increase employment outside of Yellowknife as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. Taking off on one of the questions my good colleague from Boot Lake had said, maybe I could clarify, how much oil and gas is being developed in the North Slave region at this particular time?

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as far as I am aware -- and I hope somebody will poke me if I'm wrong, but we don't have any oil and gas in the Yellowknife region.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Perhaps in a sentence or two, maybe we could explain why we have such a division -- significant division here in the headquarters region of North Slave if there's nothing being developed from the oil and gas perspective? In a sentence or two. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the -- it's not strictly a oil and gas division. It's mineral resources -- mineral and petroleum resource development. And so they are not strictly focused on petroleum or oil and gas. They are focused on all minerals. We have a total of 29 staff working in the Beaufort Delta out of a total of 104 working at headquarters. But those are total numbers across the board. The 104 also includes our economic development, our corporate management, our tourism and parks people, everybody. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Member for Boot Lake asked me to ask this next question. For sake and respect of the House, I won't ask it. But I'll let him explain what unicorns mean, I guess. Okay.

Well I'll leave it at that. I mean, the point of the little exercise here for the last eight minutes was

really trying to get at the fact that we could do work there. It's symbolic there. The work is there. The oil and gas is there. I think the Minister understands the issue. And I would support us finding ways to put people in those types of regions, including assistant deputy ministers, deputy ministers, and directors. Those positions have a real impact in communities. I mean, by this policy philosophy, I mean, we could wrap all of these jobs up and put them in headquarter, and I'm not fighting for that in any method, but I mean, we could justify them just as simple as that. So I'd say here's a real opportunity to demonstrate you support regions, and this could help. So whatever way they could do, it would be nice not just for the Member of Boot Lake, but I think it helps the diversity of economic opportunity throughout the North. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell me when was the last time this was an evaluation done of the mining incentive program. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're just going to try to pull that in -- 2020. There we go, perfect. Thank you. And if the Member would like, we'd be more than happy to share that with her as well. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was going to be my next question. But can you clarify, has this evaluation been made public or is it -- is your intention to confidentially share it with MLAs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as long as there's nothing -- you know, no personal identifiers or something like that that couldn't be public disclosed, I'm always happen to be as transparent as possible as long as we're not infringing on a previous commitment made to the participants or anything like that. But I would like the opportunity just to ensure, but absolutely, so long as there's nothing wonky in there that I'm not aware of, then I would love the opportunity to share it.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is great news. I'd love to dig into that. But in the meantime, can the Minister tell us whether this figure of an 8 to 1 multiplier -- economic multiplier out of the mining incentive program, whether that comes from that evaluation and whether that figure comes from self-reporting of participants in the mining incentive program or some independent economic analysis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it was leveraging from the ratio from last year's mining incentive program, so it would be based on company reporting. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Does the department or the Minister intend to do any independent economic analysis to verify those claims that participants are reporting, especially given that if they're the ones getting the money there's definitely an incentive -- no pun intended, although there's a pun there -- to make those figures look as good as possible? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's all assessment work that gets reviewed by our professional geologists, and there are specific reporting requirements that they have to adhere to at the end of their program. And so because the geologists are well versed in the sector and aware of what costs should come in at, there's a natural vetting that takes place in that process. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to be clear, I mean, I'm aware that there is independent geological analysis done of the, you know, geological claims that are being made, but I'm looking for more of an independent analysis by an economist. But I'll leave that for now. And last question on that is were there any recommendations coming from that evaluation done in 2020, and if so, have those recommendations been actually implemented? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like to give the deputy minister the opportunity to speak in detail about that. Thank you.

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

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there was a number of recommendations, and we implemented all of them. They ranged from including advanced exploration projects, an earlier version of MIP only was exploration. So that eligibility was included. Secondly, we created a transparent scoring rubric for all proponents so they can see what we're looking for, and then we will tell them how they scored in each of those categories afterwards so they can improve for the next year. And then lastly, flexibility for multi-year funding. Programs need to know that they can have funding from year to year, and so we at ITI have a multi-year contribution policy. And, you know, because the middle of the winter field season falls right at year end, and so do you stop March 31st? You know, and so although we need our budgets, they wanted that flexibility. So those were the changes that we made, and there's a lot of good context in the program evaluation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** That's fine. I mean, I look forward to reading their report and following up. But I do think we need to have some more independent evaluation of the program before, as my colleague recommended, we, you know, start radically increasing the funds that we're putting into this line item. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Was there any further questions? Thank you, I am going to continue on. Please turn to page 240.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, 2024-2025 Main Estimates, \$15,690,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to tourism and parks beginning on page 243 with information items on page 247. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister please speak to the decrease to the visitor information centres? I see here in 2022-2023, it was 161,000, and then it jumped in 2023-2024 to 411,000, and now it's down again to 296,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the primary driver of that is we have a visitors centre that's actually located outside of the Northwest Territories in the Yukon. It's the Dempster Delta Visitor Information Centre. It is in a -- on a piece of land in a building that we leased, and the Indigenous government on whose land that sits would like that facility back. And so that facility is going to be no longer. And ITI is looking at other ways that it can ensure that visitors to the area and to the region have access to information about the Northwest Territories. So, for example, in the Dawson visitor information centre and the Whitehorse visitor information centre, they have agreed to have information on the Dempster Highway and up to Tuk and all the wonderful ways you can get into the Northwest Territories and the great things you can do in those locations. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I am going to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, just briefly -- and I'm assuming maybe following up on my colleague's question -- I notice that the seasonal positions in the Beaufort Delta dropped by three coming up in this year. Can the Minister speak to why we're no longer required to have those positions in Inuvik? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the visitor information centre that I was just talking about did have three seasonal positions. It had the supervisor of the Dempster Delta Visitor Centre as well as two travel counsellor positions as well. And those positions will be sunseting due to the facility no longer being available to us.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** That's fine, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of revenues and potential revenues from our parks and campgrounds, I know that there were some changes made recently. So on the one hand, I'm wondering what the department can do to ensure that low income people across our territory still have as much access as possible to parks and campgrounds. I'll start with that one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, this was the first increase to the cost of our park fees, our park stays for the first time in 15 years. It works out to about 40 cents a year for the campsite per night, or a \$5 increase. And while we want as many people, for sure, to enjoy our parks as possible, we've tried to ensure that we're keeping up with kind of industry standards as well as still ensuring that we are making that sector a viable sector for people who operate private campgrounds as well in the territory. And I can confirm for the Member as well that we're not -- we're kind of right in the middle of park fees across the country. So we weren't striving to be at the top end of that or anything. We wanted to make sure that it was a reasonable increase to keep up with the costs. But I can also confirm too that we still heavily subsidize park costs across the territory. So it is not a revenue neutral enterprise at all. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And then my follow-up to that is on the other hand, we still see things like major discounts, 50 percent discount for long-term stays, and so I'm wondering -- that seems to me like an opportunity to gain more revenues in that that's a pretty lucrative thing, at least around here, for people to be able to sort of reserve a spot for the whole summer at a campground or something and something people might be willing to pay more for. So can the Minister explain the rationale for this kind of large discount for that kind of what I would call a perk and whether that's being looked at for a potential way to increase revenue? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the Member is absolutely right. It is two parks close to the proximity of Yellowknife that offer these long-term stay discounts. It's Prelude Lake and Reid Lake. Unfortunately, because those two long-term stays and the significant discount of them is prescribed in legislation, it's a longer change than simply a regulatory change which is much, much easier to do. Why those two landed in legislation back in the day, I'm not sure but they did. So I hear the Member and absolutely acknowledge what she is saying, but it is definitely a long-term tackle. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** That's fine. Thank you for that. And that is quite astonishing to see that that specific thing was included in legislation. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Colleagues, we're going to stop here with a hard stop at 8 o'clock, and we'll resume tomorrow. So noting the clock, committee, I will now rise and report progress. Thank you to the Minister and to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I was going to make a little note here that the Speaker had said that they're going to be meeting until eight, so because of that, noting the time, I just want to thank the Minister and your witnesses. And then we will resume tomorrow.

So sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses out of the chamber, and I will report progress. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1) and Minister's Statement 24-1(1), Tabled Document 111-20(1), and Tabled Document 93-20(1), and would like to report progress with one motion carried, and consideration of Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1) and Minister's Statement 24-1(1) are concluded.

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-Wiilideh. Can I have a seconder, please. Inuvik Twin Lakes. All those in favour? Opposed? Absention? Close vote, but motion passed.

---Carried

Reports of Committee of the Whole. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 15, notices of motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER.** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Member from Yellowknife Centre wishes to go to item number 15 on orders of the day. Any nays? Seeing no nays, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Notices of Motion (Reversion)

#### MOTION 35-20(1): EMERGENCY PLAN SUPPORT OF R MUNICIPALITIES AND COMMUNITY GOVERNMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs direct the emergency management organization to draft all emergency plans for every Northwest Territories community over the next two years, to ensure all plans are reasonably and consistently done;

And furthermore, that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs provide financial support to all applicable governments, to allow them to fine-tune and complete their specific community emergency plan reflective of their respective community needs, inventorying of assets and assessment of their partners and supports;

And furthermore, once a community plan is prepared, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs posts each community emergency plan on the Municipal and Community Affairs website, to ensure they are publicly accessible for transparency;

And furthermore, that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs acquires the financial resources for each community, to ensure all

plans are reviewed and practiced from time to time, based on reasonable industry standards, which will demonstrate leadership and confidence in these safety plans for all Northwest Territories residents;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Notices of Motion. 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 Tuesday, June 11th, 2024, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act
  - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
18. First Reading of Bills



19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - 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.

This House stands adjourned until Tuesday,  
June 11th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

