



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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

**Day 95**

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

**UNEDITED HANSARD**

**Tuesday, June 2, 2026**

Pages XX - XX

**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

This is an unedited Hansard

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# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 10

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>PRAYER OR REFLECTION .....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>1</b>  |
| MINISTER'S STATEMENT 211-20(1): WINTER AND SUMMER RESUPPLY SEASONS .....                                                                                                                                                           | 1         |
| MINISTER'S STATEMENT 212-20(1): HOMELESSNESS: SEASONAL UPDATE.....                                                                                                                                                                 | 2         |
| <b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>3</b>  |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1044-20(1): CONGRATULATIONS TO ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE.....                                                                                                                                                      | 3         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1045-20(1): 25TH ANNUAL ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT EXPO .....                                                                                                                                                           | 4         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1046-20(1): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES .....                                                                                                                                                                     | 4         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1047-20(1): FORT GOOD HOPE HOUSING .....                                                                                                                                                                        | 5         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1048-20(1): SUPPORT FOR TRADES .....                                                                                                                                                                            | 5         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1049-20(1): ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILDREN.....                                                                                                                                                                    | 5         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1050-20(1): FRAME LAKE YOUTH PARLIAMENT STATEMENT .....                                                                                                                                                         | 6         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1051-20(1): HEALTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY .....                                                                                                                                                                     | 6         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1052-20(1): CONCERNS WITH NAVIGATING THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH SYSTEM .....                                                                                                                              | 7         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1053-20(1): DEH CHO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.....                                                                                                                                                                    | 8         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1054-20(1): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUDIT .....                                                                                                                                                               | 8         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1055-20(1): YOUTH PARLIAMENT STATEMENT – BAILEY NIGIYOK .....                                                                                                                                                   | 9         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1056-20(1): YOUTH PARLIAMENT STATEMENT – HAYDEN PEARCE .....                                                                                                                                                    | 9         |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1057-20(1): CONNECTION .....                                                                                                                                                                                    | 10        |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1058-20(1): CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ROCK MATTE.....                                                                                                                                                             | 10        |
| <b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY.....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>11</b> |
| <b>REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES.....</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>12</b> |
| COMMITTEE REPORT 45-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES AND PRIVILEGES' REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NO. 4, DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND MOVED TO COW .....                   | 12        |
| COMMITTEE REPORT 46-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS' REPORT ON THE STATUTORY REVIEW OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HERITAGE FUND ACT, DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND ADOPTED, RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT REQUESTED ..... | 12        |
| COMMITTEE REPORT 47-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S REPORT ON HEALTHCARE ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY, DEEMED READ, MOVED INTO COW .....                                                                    | 15        |
| <b>ORAL QUESTIONS.....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>19</b> |
| QUESTION 1255-20(1): OFFERINGS FOR TRADES STUDENTS.....                                                                                                                                                                            | 19        |
| QUESTION 1256-20(1): CABINET SHUFFLE.....                                                                                                                                                                                          | 20        |
| QUESTION 1257-20(1): TWIN FALLS TRAIL.....                                                                                                                                                                                         | 21        |
| QUESTION 1258-20(1): FORT GOOD HOPE CONSTRUCTION CENTRE .....                                                                                                                                                                      | 22        |
| QUESTION 1259-20(1): CHILDREN IN CARE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS .....                                                                                                                                                                 | 22        |
| QUESTION 1260-20(1): NAVIGATING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM .....                                                                                                                                                                        | 23        |
| QUESTION 1261-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING .....                                                                                                                                                                                | 23        |
| QUESTION 1262-20(1): INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES .....                                                                                                                                                    | 24        |
| QUESTION 1263-20(1): DEH CHO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS .....                                                                                                                                                                             | 25        |
| QUESTION 1264-20(1): LESSONS LEARNED ON MINE LICENSES.....                                                                                                                                                                         | 25        |
| QUESTION 1265-20(1): SUPPORTS FOR ADDICTIONS .....                                                                                                                                                                                 | 26        |
| QUESTION 1266-20(1): NON-COMPLIANCE OF STATUTORY DEADLINES .....                                                                                                                                                                   | 26        |
| QUESTION 1267-20(1): SAFETY OF ROADS ALONG RIVER SYSTEM .....                                                                                                                                                                      | 27        |
| QUESTION 1268-20(1): IMPROVISED DRUG PARAPHERNALIA .....                                                                                                                                                                           | 27        |
| QUESTION 1269-20(1): CAMP CONNECTIONS.....                                                                                                                                                                                         | 28        |
| QUESTION 1270-20(1): WELLNESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE STATUS .....                                                                                                                                                                     | 29        |
| QUESTION 1271-20(1): STATUS OF SELF GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLVILLE LAKE.....                                                                                                                                                | 29        |
| QUESTION 1272-20(1): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES.....                                                                                                                                                                                | 30        |
| QUESTION 1273-20(1): CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLIC TENDERS .....                                                                                                                                                                        | 31        |
| <b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>31</b> |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 528-20(1): PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 49: SAFER COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT.....                                                                                                                         | 31        |

|                                                                                                                                                                       |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| TABLED DOCUMENT 529-20(1): STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL 49: SAFER COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT.....                                                          | 31        |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 530-20(1): PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON PUBLIC SAFETY LEGISLATION: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT .....                                                                 | 31        |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 531-20(1): REVIEW OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT .....                                                                        | 31        |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 532-20(1): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION MATTERS 20TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DRAFT TERMS.....                                                         | 32        |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 533-20(1): CANCER CARE VISION: A LIVING FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY AND PRIORITIES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....                                       | 32        |
| TABLED DOCUMENT 534-20(1): STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL 51: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS ACT.....                                             | 32        |
| <b>NOTICES OF MOTION .....</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>32</b> |
| MOTION 81-20(1): REORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH GOVERNANCE.....                                                                                                  | 32        |
| MOTION 82-20(1): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO OCTOBER 20, 2026.....                                                                                           | 32        |
| MOTION 83-20(1): REAPPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER .....                                                                                                        | 32        |
| MOTION 84-20(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION MATTERS .....                                                                                      | 33        |
| MOTION 85-20(1): CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES .....                                                                                          | 33        |
| <b>MOTIONS .....</b>                                                                                                                                                  | <b>33</b> |
| MOTION 83-20(1): REAPPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER, CARRIED .....                                                                                               | 33        |
| <b>NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS.....</b>                                                                                                              | <b>34</b> |
| BILL 50: MARINE TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION ACT .....                                                                                                                  | 34        |
| BILL 51: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS ACT.....                                                                                                     | 34        |
| BILL 52: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), No. 1, 2026-2027 .....                                                                       | 34        |
| <b>SECOND READING OF BILLS.....</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>34</b> |
| BILL 49: SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, CARRIED .....                                                                                                      | 34        |
| RECORDED VOTE .....                                                                                                                                                   | 38        |
| BILL 52: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), No. 1, 2026-2027 .....                                                                        | 39        |
| <b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS .....</b>                                                                                       | <b>39</b> |
| COMMITTEE MOTION 166-20(1): CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED DOCUMENT 521-20(1): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), No. 1, 2026-2027, CARRIED .....    | 56        |
| COMMITTEE MOTION 168-20(1): BILL 48: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS’ COMPENSATION ACT – DELETION AND SUBSTITUTION IN SUBCLAUSE 2(1), PARAGRAPH 14.1(2)(B), CARRIED ..... | 59        |
| COMMITTEE MOTION 169-20(1): BILL 48: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS’ COMPENSATION ACT – DELETION AND SUBSTITUTION IN CLAUSE 6 .....                                      | 61        |
| <b>THIRD READING OF BILLS .....</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>62</b> |
| BILL 41: AN ACT TO AMEND THE REAL ESTATE AGENTS’ LICENSING ACT, CARRIED.....                                                                                          | 62        |
| RECORDED VOTE .....                                                                                                                                                   | 62        |
| <b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>62</b> |

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, June 2, 2026****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. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:36 p.m.

**Prayer or Reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

**SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):**

Please be seated. I'd like to thank Lillian Elias for the opening blessing.

Colleagues, good afternoon. I am going to keep this short. In this House, I expect to see behaviour, hear debate that makes our residents proud. I do not see and hear that behaviour and debate. Honestly, I am disappointed.

As Speaker of the House, I don't want to hear heckling and jeers. I don't want to see angry looks being directed at one another. I don't want to hear names used in the chamber. We all have titles and expect to use them. I don't want to hear Members of the Legislative Assembly talking over one another, and I certainly do not want to hear Members challenge me, even in zest.

We're here to do important work on behalf of the people in this territory. To do that, we need to work together and be respectful of each other. We will not agree on everything; however, when we disagree, we need to be respectful for each other. Our debate and discussions should be thoughtful and constructive. You can always choose to be respectful, and I am asking you to make that choice.

This is a short sitting. I have already seen behaviour that is unacceptable and beyond the standard to which we should hold ourselves - behaviour that does not show the respect needed for each other, for this institution, and for the people we represent. We can do better, we should do better, and we must do better.

I have said this before, colleagues. I don't want to have to say it again. Please choose your words thoughtfully and carefully. Please show each other, this institution, and our people the level of respect that we deserve. Thank you.

Ministers' statements, Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 211-20(1):  
WINTER AND SUMMER RESUPPLY  
SEASONS**

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on this year's winter road and summer barging resupply seasons.

Every year, communities across the Northwest Territories rely on a massive, coordinated effort to make sure fuel and essential goods arrive safely and on time. For many communities, especially those without all-season road access, these resupply seasons are critical.

Through the fuel services division, the Government of the Northwest Territories coordinates fuel delivery to communities across the territory. That work happens year-round and involves an enormous amount of planning, forecasting, logistics, monitoring, and coordination behind the scenes. Whether fuel moves by winter road, barge, truck, or marine vessel, none of it happens without the careful and committed work of the fuel services division and the many operators, contractors, and transportation partners who help make these deliveries possible.

Despite lower than average water levels, though higher than 2024 barging season, it was successful with all planned fuel and cargo deliveries completed to ten northern communities through the marine transportation services. That strong season helped set us up for a winter haul.

This past winter, 10.5 million litres of fuel were delivered. More than 8 million litres of that fuel were delivered to eight winter road communities across communities and the rest to the all-weather winter road accessible communities.

Regardless of the efforts put forward each resupply season, staff work year-round to monitor supply levels, manage logistics, and coordinate deliveries to help ensure

communities have the fuel they need when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, a colder than usual winter helped support winter road operations this season. Roads remained open longer and were able to support heavier loads and weight limits than expected. That said, crews had to stay flexible and responsive throughout the season. To keep the roads safe and reliable, crews carried out additional flooding on ice crossings and increased monitoring and maintenance activities. The entire Mackenzie Valley winter road system was also widened this season to accommodate moving oversized modular buildings up to Colville Lake. This widening included brushing where necessary and removal and repositioning of signs. In February, the Sahtu experienced a high level of snowfall through the month resulting in increased maintenance costs to the road that had to be maintained with the new extended width.

Mr. Speaker, every resupply season comes with uncertainty. Weather conditions can quickly shift, water levels can change, and sudden disruptions can have major impacts on timelines and operations. That is why planning and contingency work is so important as part of what our teams do year-round.

Preparation for this year's summer resupply season is already well underway. Marine transportation services crews are continuing work to improve and maintain vessels while staff monitor snowpack and water levels ahead of the sailing season. Coordination is also underway with the Canadian Coast Guard to support buoy placement along the shipping routes. At the same time, cargo planning is continuing so communities, businesses, and customers can prepare for the upcoming season. Cargo rates, cut-off dates, and tentative sailing schedules were all announced earlier this month to help residents and businesses plan ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the people behind the scenes that do this work. A Successful resupply season does not happen as a result of one division or one group. They depend on coordination between the fuel services division, highway operations teams, marine transportation services, contractors, truckers, vessel operators, suppliers, clients, and the many others working together across the territory.

Every season teaches us something new. Our teams continue to adapt, improve, and strengthen the systems that communities rely on every year. Most importantly, this work helps ensure Northerners continue to receive the fuel,

supplies, and essential goods that they depend on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 212-20(1):  
HOMELESSNESS: SEASONAL UPDATE

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, housing insecurity remains a significant challenge across the Northwest Territories and understanding its full scope is essential. Through an empathetic, collaborative approach, strong partnerships, and continued coordination, we are working to advance the priorities in the government's strategic response to homelessness, titled 'A Way Home', to better support individuals facing housing challenges.

The territorial housing needs assessment found that homelessness in the territory, as in much of Canada, is a growing challenge. The 2024 point-in-time homelessness count identified 327 individuals experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife. Meanwhile, the assessment highlights nearly 20 percent of its survey respondents had someone currently staying in their household on a temporary basis, an indicator of hidden homelessness. Our strategy puts forward solutions to interrupt homelessness wherever possible, and we cannot lose sight of those who are in a precarious living situation in delivering on these solutions.

To strengthen our understanding of homelessness in small communities, the GNWT is working with community partners to complete a point-in-time homelessness count in communities across the Northwest Territories this year.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT is focused on expanding transitional and supportive housing, strengthening shelter operations, and increasing the supply of appropriate and affordable social housing. For some, transitional housing provides a step out of homelessness and emergency shelters into more permanent housing. For others, particularly those returning home after addictions treatment, it provides access to safe, sober housing that supports continued recovery.

In Yellowknife, a temporary transitional housing residence on Highway No. 3, operated by the Yellowknife Women's Society, began accepting residents in December 2025, providing a safe and stable place to stay, with life skills programming and culturally grounded supports.

I am pleased to share that this is currently operating at full capacity. Sheltering 24 individuals, the facility has already supported successful move outs into treatment or longer term housing. These much-needed services would not be possible without the dedicated work of the Yellowknife Women's Society.

Transitional housing for addictions recovery is being expanded. Through a partnership between Housing NWT, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Salvation Army, a renovated five-bedroom home in Yellowknife now provides safe and sober housing for individuals continuing their recovery. A similar home developed in partnership with health and social services and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation will open in Inuvik this summer. I look forward to the continued work we will accomplish through these valued partnerships.

As we work to prevent and reduce homelessness, emergency shelters remain a critical entry point to safety and stability. In Inuvik, the homeless shelter and warming shelter are now operated by partner organizations in line with GNWT's efforts to stabilize services. In Yellowknife, Housing NWT assumed responsibility for the day shelter and the sobering centre from health and social services on April 1st, 2026. The goal of these transitions is to bring services together, with other support programs, improving coordination and access.

Additionally, Budget 2026-2027 increased ongoing funding for service operators managing emergency homeless shelters in the communities of Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Hay River. As warmer weather arrives, the GNWT continues to work with the City of Yellowknife and community partners to respond to homelessness related issues as they arise, ensuring shelter spaces are available and accessible and reducing barriers to shelter use. The GNWT has collaborated with partners, such as the City of Yellowknife and the RCMP, to develop standard operating procedures that guide the GNWT's response to encampments, and how we interface with other governments, partners, and agencies. These are needed as we seek to understand the needs of residents who live outside the shelter system and reside in encampments as well as support them in accessing services that are available.

These initiatives demonstrate the importance of strong partnerships and community-led initiatives to meaningfully address homelessness in the territory. Homelessness is not something any one government or organization can solve alone.

Mr. Speaker, addressing homelessness remains a shared priority for the GNWT and our partners. While the causes are complex, our direction is clear: To work together, rely on evidence, and focus on solutions that support stability, dignity, and longer term housing. This work is not about quick fixes; it is about building the right supports in the right places so that every resident of the Northwest Territories has a safe place to call home. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Ministers' Statements. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1044-20(1): CONGRATULATIONS TO ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Arctic Energy Alliance on their 2026 Company of the Year Award from Canadian Biomass Magazine. While AEA is, in actual fact, a non-profit society and not a company, they still punch well above their weight in the biomass community here in Canada and internationally.

During one of the coldest months in recent memory, in January 2026 I attended their Arctic bioenergy summit and tour here in Yellowknife to learn more personally and also bring back ideas to inform a standing committee study on renewable heating and economic diversification.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the summit and tour were world-class. The NWT has a lot to be proud of when it comes to adopting biomass heat but still has room to grow. The summit was an opportunity for all attending to learn about some new technologies and approaches that work in cold climates. The summit brought together community and Indigenous governments, industry, international academics, and project leaders from across the circumpolar world. Discussions focused on exploring practical bioenergy solutions such as wood pellets and chips that can help reduce heating costs, strengthen energy security, and support sustainable economic development in northern and remote communities.

Arctic Energy Alliance is rightfully being recognized as a leader in biomass space for the good work that they have done in the NWT and for connecting the NWT with pragmatic approaches that can help Northerners save on their bills and reduce their GHG footprint. Once

again, congratulations to all the passionate staff at Arctic Energy Alliance on their award and recognition of their outstanding work by their peers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1045-20(1):  
25TH ANNUAL ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT  
EXPO

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about an annual event taking place in Inuvik between June 16th and 19th, I believe, Mr. Speaker. Of course I am talking about the annual Arctic Development Expo. This is the 25th annual this year. It started back in 2001 as the Inuvik Petroleum Show, as we knew it then, when it was first started, when there was still the light at the end of the tunnel for the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline led by the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and from that started the Inuvik Petroleum Show. And then in -- I think it was in 2019 is when they transitioned from the petroleum show. After we -- our regulatory system, as I've stated before, slowly choked the life out of that project, we moved it to the Arctic Development Expo.

So, again, it's the 25th annual, and for the first time since the transition they're expecting over 250 attendees. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, last year there was about 100 attendees at the show. Back when it was the petroleum show, we had up to 700, 800 folks come to Inuvik to attend. So very exciting.

And obviously that's on the heels of the announcements of what's happening with the DND funding, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, and all the other major projects in the area. Of course, as we've said, there is an eye on the Arctic right now, Mr. Speaker.

So I am told this year they're at over 300 registered delegates and still counting. So very exciting. I am happy to say that our Premier and our Cabinet will be attending, will be sitting on some panels up there, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to that.

The demand, once again, is so high. As done previously, they're bringing in barge camps and setting them up on the river and setting up buses to bring folks back and forth. And also, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at 62 trade show booths in total right now with 55 exhibitors, main industries up there this year representing construction, infrastructure, transportation, as well as local Indigenous, territorial, and federal governments.

And of note as well, the department of defence, DND, are organizing a business to business session during the expo on June 17th from 3 to 4 p.m., which I expect will be very well attended.

So a big congratulations to the amazing staff up there that put this on every year. It's not easy to do. Those of you who have been there before, know what I am talking about; it is an amazing show. And those of you who are attending this year, I look forward to seeing you up there and I look forward to another great event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1046-20(1):  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, reforming child and family services has been a serious topic in this chamber since before the first major audit in 2014, and it has remained so ever since despite each new audit reminding us that nothing has ever changed.

After reading last week's audit, I find myself wondering at what point do we start trying to fix a problem or a department that does not want to change. The fact that no Minister has ever improved child and family services calls into question whether any Minister ever will. So today I want to ask my colleagues what exactly we are asking for when we say we want change.

We continue to ask the Minister to change how the department operates to improve outcomes. Yet, like every Minister before her, she invokes our trust and patience until we look the other way. This is not a serious conversation.

There is a consensus in this chamber that the territorial government is a colonial institution so why should it be entrusted with our Indigenous children? To us, the fact that 90 percent of the children in care are Indigenous is a simple problem but within a colonial structure, that is simply standard practice.

As Murray Sinclair said, the residential school monster now lives on in the child welfare system. So when this government was non-committal on establishing an Office of a Child and Youth Advocate, I was not surprised because I was not -- that I were responsible for keeping that monster alive. I would avoid independent oversight too.

So when the Minister says trust me and be patient, what I hear her telling me is that when constituents call me in the middle of the night

because their children were apprehended at the airport or child apprehension where officers beat down the front door with a sledgehammer at a grandmother's home who is watching the grandchildren, that I should trust her and that they will be bad parents and be patient because eventually they'll lose hope and stop asking for help.

Mr. Speaker, I am not looking the other way and neither are my leaders, nor do I believe deeply colonial systems can be reformed. I will ask the Minister later today whether she will advance the transfer of child and family services to Indigenous governments or whether she will make a way for someone who will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1047-20(1):  
FORT GOOD HOPE HOUSING

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the private sector is critical to our economy, either at the territorial level or in the small communities throughout the territories.

Mr. Speaker, these enterprisers contribute significantly to the stimulus and stability on a disposable economy.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment together support building contracts, business development to the Fort Good Hope Construction Centre. This is a milestone, Mr. Speaker. A northern trades centre building demanded homes. Mr. Speaker, during construction, benefits are expanded, created through O&M partnerships, employment trades apprentices. Mr. Speaker, truly an emerging industry with a product in high demand.

Mr. Speaker, there are many unique aspects of this project - local ownership, workforce development, and the ability of youth drafting, designing, building floor plans, and witnessing the construction of those floor plans. Mr. Speaker, I want to say a huge leadership thank-you to the Minister of ITI, Caitlin Cleveland, and the Minister of Housing NWT, Lucy Kuptana, and the local Yamoga Land Corporation in Fort Good Hope.

Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions to the Minister responsible for Housing NWT on logistics and update. Mr. Speaker, this is a proud moment for all project stakeholders as the summer construction season starts. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1048-20(1):  
SUPPORT FOR TRADES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT cannot build its way out of the housing crisis while leaving local workers on the sidelines. Public housing projects should help small communities grow their own trades workforce. When units are built in larger centres or by southern manufacturers, local residents lose the chance to gain experience on the very project their communities need.

Many residents already work with their hands. They fix what they can at home and learn through small projects. What is missing is a pathway that turns that practical ability into recognized training. For many Northerners, certification still depends on Alberta-based technical training. Year after year, at least half of NWT trade students have to leave the territory to complete that requirement. For residents in small communities, that means major costs and long periods away from home. Mr. Speaker, this is why we need a practical pathway into the trades, one that gives capable residents a realistic first step while still taking safety standards seriously. The goal is to create a pathway into certification not a shortcut around it. The NWT has housing work that could support this experience. We need to use it more deliberately so residents can support their communities and build confidence before committing to certification.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT needs homes built and repaired, and it needs more local tradespeople. We need to stop treating those as separate issues.

Mr. Speaker, our system has to reflect the realities of small communities. Public housing dollars should build homes today and help build the local trades workforce our community needs for the future. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ECE at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1049-20(1):  
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILDREN

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address a crisis of accountability regarding children who have been stripped of their homes and are in care in

another jurisdiction within the NWT. The real grim our children are in care and dumped into environments that actively fail to support their well-being. This isn't a matter of minor administration oversight. This is systemic failure. My constituents and many communities are demanding to know why established protocols are being ignored when responsibility for the vulnerable children is in other facilities when they cannot be in their home communities with immediate family members. The Minister needs to understand this is a blatant disregard for placement protocols when Indigenous children enter the system. We have clear directives. Priority must be given to the culturally appropriate family and community-based care with institutionalized or licensed foster care used strictly as a last resort. Instead, those protections are being bypassed.

Mr. Speaker, these protocols are not optional guidelines. They exist to protect the child's cultural identity, their family ties, and their basic human rights. We cannot tolerate a two-tier system where children outside our borders are stripped of protection, care, and procedural accountability that they're legally owed. The department must be able to assist these children and families to be reunited under proper protocol. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions from the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1050-20(1):  
FRAME LAKE YOUTH PARLIAMENT  
STATEMENT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as with several Members this sitting, I would like to highlight the words of Frame Lake's Youth Parliamentarian this year.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak up for people experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife who are dealing with unsafe and often violent conditions. Yes, we have shelters, but how can support services actually help if both residents and staff don't feel safe inside them? There have been reports of staff stepping into fights and ending up with serious trauma and concerns about how some RCMP interactions are handled.

This problem within shelters has been a major issue and concern for a long time. We need to implement the right and proper training for both the staff and RCMP so that these situations can be handled in the best way possible.

Mr. Speaker, the 2024 Point in Time report shows 74 percent of people experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife, which is 226 individuals, were reported with substance use. This can increase aggression and impaired judgment, contributing to community violence. While plans mention addiction services, current options often require leaving the territory or relying on phone support. Why must people leave their families and culture to get help? With 50 percent of funding going to housing and only 4 percent to services, we're not breaking the cycle. We need stronger local addiction and mental health support in Yellowknife. Enforcing the idea to build a facility for Yellowknife results in a safer environment, especially downtown, for people including the future generation. There will be a higher chance of a decrease in violence due to substance use. Furthermore, the stress of choosing to go into rehab would be reduced significantly, and there would be no need to think about relocating. I believe that this is especially for public safety and a long-term solution.

So I wanted to thank my Youth Parliamentarian for raising these concerns, Mr. Speaker, and read them into the public record on their behalf. Thank you very much.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1051-20(1):  
HEALTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past two years, I have been going on and on about strengthening primary care because residents across this territory need and deserve to be able to see a health care practitioner in a timely way and to be supported by a team that knows them and understands their health history.

Currently, it is still a struggle. Some Yellowknifers can't get an appointment at all with Yellowknife Primary Care since there's not enough available slots. There are still chronic nurse vacancies in community health centres and some health cabin communities are still waiting months or years for a visit by a nurse or doctor. So that's why we fought so hard several months ago to get money added to the budget for primary care, and we are seeing the results of those efforts in the supplementary estimates tabled this week, with almost \$2.7 million proposed for new nurse positions in primary care. So I am very much encouraged by this. I do believe it's the only way forward to be able to ensure we get more appointment slots and more frequent visits to smaller communities. But in order to see results, Mr. Speaker, we

need to up our game on recruitment and retention.

Over the last year and throughout the last sitting, we were told that the answers to human resource challenges, like chronic vacancies and poor retention, would all be found in the people strategy. Now that process was delayed for at least six months as we were told HSS needed more time to incorporate staff feedback. While the people strategy was finally released in April, and I have to say that after all that buildup, it was a bit of a letdown.

If you take out all the full-page glossy photos, it amounts to about 10 pages of text, and it's extremely high level. It's full of broad principles, like effective communication, prioritizing safety and mental health in the workplace, cultural safety and antiracism but, honestly I can't find anything new in there that would signal a major shift in approach. We have many staff already tasked with health care recruitment and they do standard things like setting up booths at conferences, but I would argue we need to get more creative and more practical with our recruitment and retention approaches. Mr. Speaker, I ask for your unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our strength in the North is in our community and our personal connections. We share information best through word of mouth, so let's better empower our existing workers and community members to recruit from within their networks. Let's emphasize the personal touch and make sure that we give any new staff a real northern welcome to each of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Colleagues, before we continue with a Member's statement, I'd like to recognize the former Monfwi Member from 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th Assembly, former Minister and former Speaker and now the grand Chief for the Tlicho. So welcome back to the Assembly, Mr. Lafferty.

Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1052-20(1):  
CONCERNS WITH NAVIGATING THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH  
SYSTEM

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, once again I am sounding the alarm about serious and growing systemic failures in our healthcare system that are now forcing Northerners to leave their home

communities in order to access medically required care.

CBC North recently reported on a case in Yellowknife involving Lauren Seabrook, a Range Lake constituent, a health care professional, and an occupational therapist who has dedicated her career to supporting children with complex needs. Lauren was later confronted with her own rare and serious medical condition requiring ongoing specialized treatment, including tube feeding and coordinated clinical support over an extended period of care. Despite her professional understanding of the system, she was left without adequate local supports whatsoever. Instead of receiving coordinated system-led care, she was forced into managing a fragmented system of her own, making repeated daily calls simply to arrange basic and essential services, coordinate providers, and maintain continuity of treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a functioning care model. It is a transfer of clinical responsibility onto patients who are already in crisis.

Medical professionals involved in Lauren's care, described in the CBC North report, confirmed that the Northwest Territories does not currently have the programs required to provide her ongoing levels of support due to gaps in interjurisdictional arrangements including access to Alberta's home nutrition support program. She was advised the only safe option was to relocate to Alberta in order to continue treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an isolated administrative oversight. It reflects a broader structural issue - insufficient case management capacity, fragmented service delivery across systems, and health agreements that do not adequately support Northerners with complex or chronic conditions requiring long-term coordination and continuity of care. When even healthcare professionals cannot navigate the system they work in, we must recognize the seriousness of this failure. We are also hearing increasing amounts from residents who describe being left alone without adequate support during vulnerable medical moments further underscoring the lack of coordinated navigation and patient-centered care.

Mr. Speaker, no one should have to choose between their health and their home. Period. I urge the Minister of Health and Social Services to act immediately to strengthen case management supports and apologize to my constituent for the fact that she has to leave her home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1053-20(1):  
DEH CHO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, eight months ago I raised serious concerns about the GNWT's approach to Deh Cho treaty negotiations. Today, those concerns remain unresolved. Deh Cho communities are negotiating a land and governance treaty with Canada with the GNWT as a third party. The concern is the uncooperative approach the GNWT continues to take in these negotiations. Despite repeated concerns from Deh Cho leaders and despite meetings with the Premier, GNWT negotiators continue to hold positions that undermine the legitimate aspirations of Deh Cho First Nations and threaten the success of these negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be fair to describe this attitude as colonial. In an era of reconciliation, this should not still be happening.

The Premier has said that GNWT supports moving away from colonial government toward a future with self-governing First Nations. He has said that GNWT will have less authority in the future and that programs and services now delivered by the GNWT will be delivered by Indigenous governments.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that future is now. The time for action is now. Deh Cho First Nations are asking the Premier to confirm that the GNWT will comply with the 2001 Interim Measures Agreement and clearly state that no land in Deh Cho territory will be sold or leased without the support of affected Deh Cho First Nations communities.

The Premier has also stated support for joint decision-making and land disposition in Deh Cho territory. Recent events at Lindberg Landing where illegal squatters have effectively seized Deh Cho lands show why that action cannot wait. Deh Cho First Nations are also asking the Premier to give new direction to GNWT negotiators, including support for future Deh Cho government authority over wildlife, harvesting, wildfire response, and access to Deh Cho lands by non-residents. I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1054-20(1):  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUDIT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today not in anger but in pure disgust. The auditor general's child and family services report proves that the system rot goes back even further than most days we talk about. The 17th Assembly, over a decade ago, it is officially petrified into a permanent, catastrophic failure. For 12 years, this House has been fed glossy stories and hopeful wishes.

In 2018, as stated by then-Minister in his words, I quote, it was gut-wrenching. The facts at that time proved that 88 percent of children in care were Indigenous. Mr. Speaker, today that failure rate is 91 percent. Almost every child -- single child under the Minister's protection has been functionally left at risk.

Mr. Speaker, just when we thought the Minister's department hit rock bottom, oh no, she handed out shovels, Mr. Speaker. By law, suspected child abuse must be assessed within 24 hours and yet one-third of the time it takes past 16 days to just open a file. Mr. Speaker, this isn't paperwork; this is people avoiding responsibility. When investigations are triggered, they blow past the legal deadline 71 percent of the time.

Mr. Speaker, this is an obliterating failure. Who is going to take responsibility? So don't dare say, oh it's a paperwork problem. It's a responsibility problem, Mr. Speaker.

So the policy gap that 98 percent of the children are not in proper homes, this is state-sponsored cultural abandonment, Mr. Speaker. The predecessor blamed lack of feet on the ground. The current Minister says operational pressures. I see it as creative avoidance response, Mr. Speaker.

Frontline vacancies are between 14 and 34 percent so stop blaming the staff, and somebody needs to take responsibility for finding people to work there, Mr. Speaker. While this Minister burns through three-quarters of a billion dollars in the budget, no one can see one single executive direction to say fix this at all costs. So 908 days have passed at the helm. This Minister claims this matter matters to her. Well, Mr. Speaker, I yet to see any proof of it. So what we see is the systematic racist system that she used to rail against continues under her watch.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I think we need to appoint another health czar to oversee the health Minister, Mr. Speaker, because this shameful result just keeps getting more disappointing. In short, I hope the Minister will do the honourable thing and request a shuffle, or we should. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1055-20(1):  
YOUTH PARLIAMENT STATEMENT –  
BAILEY NIGIYOK

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the statement from Youth Parliamentarian Bailey Nigiyok from Ulukhaktok. Her words resonate with me, and I am humbled by her honesty. These are Bailey's words.

Mr. Speaker, alcohol has been a problem for a long time in many of the northern communities. When people drink too much, it can lead to fighting, stress at home, and kids not feeling safe or supported. Teenagers and families are dealing with impact of other substances too, Mr. Speaker. Weed is different but it has become really normal, especially for youth. A lot of people think it's not a big deal because it's legal but for teens, it can affect motivation, focus in school, and mental health. Some people use it to relax or escape stress but sometimes it just hides bigger problems underneath.

In a small place like Ulukhaktok or other communities, it's hard to ask for help. People worry about being judged or being talked about, and there isn't a regular addiction counsellor that somebody can go to privately and consistently. Because of that, the problem can build up quietly until it becomes serious.

This government takes these concerns seriously, Mr. Speaker. To better support communities, we are working with the Department of Health and Social Services and will be providing transitional housing in all remote communities in the Northwest Territories for people coming back from addictions treatment. This means that people will have a safe place to call home while they adjust back to life in their community.

In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, we will be building a wellness centre in Ulukhaktok, Tuktoyaktuk, and Norman Wells. Instead of focusing only on addiction, this centre will focus on mental health, culture, and support. It will offer youth programs, talking circles, land-based healing workshops, and a safe place to speak openly without feeling judged. It is not about labelling people. It is about helping people build coping skills and feel stronger.

Ulukhaktok and remote northern communities are strong, but we can't ignore the real challenges. If we want healthier families and better futures for youth, we need real support in place. These investments in transitional

housing and a wellness centre is an investment in our community's future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are the words of Bailey Nigiyok, Youth Parliamentarian, but this is also a reminder for all of us in this House that people at home are watching and they're listening. They need to know that their government will support them and their elected representatives will advocate for constituents in all aspects of their lives. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker, and quyananni to Ms. Bailey Nigiyok.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Nunakput. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1056-20(1):  
YOUTH PARLIAMENT STATEMENT –  
HAYDEN PEARCE

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you Mr. Speaker,

As I have done every year after Youth Parliament, I would like to bring the words of the youth representative from Yellowknife South to the House. This year, Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife South was represented very ably by Hayden Pearce who delivered the following statement:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring forward an issue that affects many residents across the Northwest Territories - medical travel and access to appropriate health care.

For many people in our small and remote communities, accessing specialized care means leaving home for days or even weeks at a time. Traveling to regional centres or outside the territory often brings financial strain, family disruption, and emotional distress. While the medical travel program ensures access to insured service, residents continue to raise concerns about escort eligibility, delays, accommodation challenge, and gaps in communications. Another problem is the cost of medical travel to the GNWT.

There are practical steps we are taking. First, we will maximize the use of virtual appointments whenever clinically appropriate. Initial consultations, follow-up, and routine check-ins can often be done effectively through Telehealth, allowing patients to remain in their communities. Virtual care should reduce unnecessary travel while ensuring timely access to in-person hand-on treatment when it is truly required.

Second, we are building stronger supports around those who must travel including flexible escort policies for elders, youth, and vulnerable patients. In a more efficient process, we are also strengthening wraparound support by

improving communications, providing clear travel information, and exploring patient navigator roles to guide individuals through appointments, accommodations, and return travel. Building partnerships with Indigenous governments and community organizations is helping to create a safety net so that no one feels alone while receiving care far from home. And we can manage costs fairly.

Mr. Speaker, when someone is already facing a serious health concern, navigating complex travel arrangements should not add to their burden. Elders traveling alone, youth sent far from their families, and residents from our smallest communities, often describe how overwhelming it feels to arrive in a large unfamiliar centre. Being separated from language, culture, and support networks can increase fear and isolation.

Mr. Speaker, equitable health care means more than providing service. It means ensuring those services are accessible, culturally safe, and patient-centered regardless of geography.

This Assembly is strengthening our medical travel system, expanding virtual care where appropriate, and investing in meaningful support for those who must travel for treatment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you Hayden for representing Yellowknife South this year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. Members' statements. Member from Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1057-20(1):  
CONNECTION

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, June is a busy and important month of milestones and endless sunshine, and also marks Indigenous History Month, Pride Month, Immigrant Heritage Month and Juneteenth. Indigenous History Month calls on us to listen, learn, and act in the spirit of truth and reconciliation. Pride Month recognizes 2SLGBTQIPA+ identities and advocacy, reminding us that while there is joy in celebration, there is still important work to be done. Juneteenth marks both the end of slavery and the continued pursuit of justice. And Immigrant Heritage Month highlights the diversity, courage, and determination of those who have come to build new lives.

At first glance, these are separate observances in a very busy month but each is deeply connected by a common thread - the need, the very human need, for connection.

We know that connection matters yet we are living in a time where it is slipping. People are spending less time with friends and neighbours than they did even a decade ago, participation in community groups has declined, and more people report feeling lonely despite being constantly connected online, a space that seems increasingly unsafe. Our circles are shrinking and with that our opportunities to truly understand one another are shrinking too.

Connection matters so much in this moment, Mr. Speaker. It's about building bridges where gaps exist, creating spaces where everyone feels safe showing up as themselves, and ensuring that no one is left isolated or invisible. It's about moving beyond symbolic recognition toward real, everyday acts of inclusion that strengthen communities. Awareness without connection can only take us so far. Real change happens when we move closer to each other, when we listen, when we share space, and when we recognize our shared humanity.

So this June, as we celebrate, let's also challenge ourselves to reconnect. Because at the end of every day, what unites all of these observances is simple but powerful. We all want to feel connected to our shared and individual histories, identity and, most importantly, to each other. And we all deserve to be seen, heard, valued, and safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1058-20(1):  
CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ROCK MATTE

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, Rock Matte passed away peacefully on May 7, 2026, in Montreal, Quebec, at the age of 67. Born on October 2, 1958, in La Sarre, Quebec, Rock lived a full and dynamic life shaped by curiosity, independence, and a deep commitment to the people he loved. Over the years he called Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Fort Simpson home. In June 2005, he and his family moved to Fort Simpson where he became a valued member of the community. Rock was a member of the Law Society of the Northwest Territories from 2007 to 2017, contributing his knowledge and perspective to the legal field. In 2019, he moved to Montreal to be closer to his daughters while they pursued their studies at Concordia University.

Rock is survived by his loving wife, Renalyn, and his daughters Sylvia and Abigail. He was predeceased by his daughter Melissa in June 2017, as well as his parents Norma Pelletier and Gaston Matte, his brother Carol, and his sister Jocelyn.

To his daughters, Rock was a man who lived life on his own terms with independence, determination, and a spirit that could not be confined. Sylvia remembers her father as someone who followed his own path, making sacrifices while still giving his time and care to those he loved. He taught his daughters strength, resilience, and the importance of perseverance, lessons that will guide them throughout their lives.

Abigail reflected on her father's love of conversation and his passion for sharing knowledge.

Rock had a wide range of interests and an insatiable curiosity about the world. Through his words, ideas, and presence, he left an enduring legacy not only for his family but for all who had the privilege of knowing him. Above all, he was proud of and deeply devoted to his family.

Rock's brother remembered him as a self-made anthropologist, a brilliant and thoughtful individual with deep knowledge of Indigenous history, politics, and social issues. He was someone who thought critically and engaged deeply with the world around him.

As shared by his friend Muaz Hassan, Rock will be remembered for his strong presence, sharp political insights, and even his controversial opinions. Whether in agreement or disagreement, conversations with Rock were always spirited and meaningful, often ending with shared meals and lasting memories. His friendships were marked by lively discussions, mutual respect, and a sense of camaraderie that extended across borders.

Rock Matte leaves behind a legacy of intellect, independence, and love. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and acquaintances in Canada and around the world, but his spirit will live on through the lives he touched and the lessons he shared.

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Range Lake.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my friend Grand Chief Lafferty who's joined us today. I served with him in the 18th Legislative Assembly. But I'd also like to recognize two of my Range Lake constituents, Lauren Seabrook and Jeff Seabrook, who are here to observe our proceedings today. Thank you very much for being here.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] insert\* [Translation Ends] Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty [Translation] insert\* [Translation Ends] for today. Thank you. Sorry about that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize our former colleague and Grand Chief Lafferty of the Tlicho government who's been a great partner to the Government of the Northwest Territories and a great representative nationally of the Northwest Territories as well. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Hay River North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, would like to recognize Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty for being here today, and everybody else in the gallery. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will join the entourage in welcoming Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty. I also had the privilege of working with the grand chief during the 18th Assembly. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Mr. Jackson Lafferty of Tlicho. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers, and I would like to thank you very much for giving us the honour to represent the people in our ridings and the people of the Northwest Territories. I hope you will enjoy the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery  
Recognition. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member from Great Slave.

### Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 45-20(1):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES  
AND PRIVILEGES' REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF RULES OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,  
NO. 4,  
DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND MOVED  
TO COW

**MS. REID:** Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4, and commends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Committee Report 45-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4, be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

\*Deemed read - Report link

Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Committee Report 45-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Committee Report 45-20(1) has been received and will be

moved in the Committee of the Whole for future consideration.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees.  
Member from Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 46-20(1):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS' REPORT ON THE  
STATUTORY REVIEW OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HERITAGE  
FUND ACT,  
DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND  
ADOPTED, RESPONSE FROM  
GOVERNMENT REQUESTED

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Statutory Review of the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act and commends it to the House.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations conducted a statutory 10-year review of the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to assess whether the Heritage Fund is positioned to function as a credible, disciplined, and forward-looking sovereign wealth fund for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Evidence from public engagement, expert testimony, and comparisons with global best practices, showed that the Act requires modernization to ensure the fund can deliver lasting intergenerational benefits and effectively transform finite resource revenues into long-term public wealth.

The review highlighted several overarching themes essential to the success of any sovereign wealth fund:

- A clear and durable legislative purpose,
- Strong and independent governance, and
- A coherent long-term investment framework.

Committee found that the Heritage Fund's purpose must be more explicitly defined as permanent intergenerational savings supported by a governance model that separates the roles of government, an arm's-length board, and professional investment managers. Strengthening transparency and alignment with international standards, such as the Santiago Principles, is equally critical to building public trust and ensuring accountable stewardship.

Committee also emphasizes the importance of long-term financial discipline. Predictable, rules based contributions and withdrawals, protection against short-term fiscal use, and planning for resource revenue volatility are necessary for the fund to grow to a meaningful scale.

Together, the report's recommendations point towards a modernized, transparent, professionally governed Heritage Fund positioned to convert today's resource wealth into enduring prosperity. With the right legislative and governance framework, the Heritage Fund can stand as a model of intergenerational stewardship and long-term financial resilience.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will summarize the recommendations of the report.

**Recommendation 1:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to clearly describe the fund's purpose as intergenerational savings. Committee recommends replacing provision 2(2) and 2(3) in the Act with the following:

- 2(2) The purpose of the Heritage Fund is to serve as a permanent intergenerational savings mechanism for the people of the Northwest Territories.
- 2(3) The Heritage Fund is to benefit future generations of people of the Northwest Territories from ongoing economic development, including the development of non-renewable resources, by maintaining safety of principal while maximizing total return on investment.

**Recommendation 2:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop a comprehensive mandate for the Heritage Fund that goes beyond the wording in the Act and serves to explicitly link the fund's savings rule, spending rule, and investment model.

**Recommendation 3:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Minister and the financial management board, establish clear policies, oversight mechanisms, and structured decision-making processes for the Heritage Fund to ensure investment decisions align with the fund's purpose and to ensure that investment decisions remain the responsibility of an independent board free from political involvement.

**Recommendation 4:** The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to create an independent, arm's-length Heritage Fund investment board responsible for administering and managing the Heritage Fund. Committee further recommends that the board's mandate should be set out in the Act to include:

- (A) Investing the Heritage Fund in accordance with this Act and any regulations;
- (B) Providing independent professional investment expertise to safeguard and grow the fund;
- (C) Acting in the best long-term financial interests of the residents of the Northwest Territories;
- (D) Ensuring that investment decisions are made free from political involvement; and
- (E) Performing any other prescribed duties.

**Recommendation 5:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories repeal all provisions in the Act assigning investment-related powers, duties, or reporting obligations to the secretary to the financial management board and replacing with the Heritage Fund investment board.

**Recommendation 6:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish accountability, appointment, and conflict of interest provisions for Heritage Fund investment board members.

**Recommendation 7:** The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to establish a clear governance model with defined role separation between government as the fund owner, an arm's-length governing board, and professional investment managers to ensure independent and accountable oversight.

**Recommendation 8:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories align the Heritage Fund with the Santiago Principles to strengthen transparency, accountability, prudent investment practices, and long-term public trust.

**Recommendation 9:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories engage with global best practice organizations, including the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds, to support ongoing improvements to the Heritage Fund's governance and investment management.

**Recommendation 10:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a comprehensive transparency framework for the Heritage Fund, including regular plain language public reporting, audits, clear disclosure of investment strategy and performance, and mandatory publication of governance and investment policies.

**Recommendation 11:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories continue 10-year statutory reviews of the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to be publicly undertaken by a committee of the Legislative Assembly and requiring a government response.

As such, committee recommends that section 10 concerning the 10-year review of the Act remain in place.

**Recommendation 12:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a clear, legislated investment mandate for the Heritage Fund that defines its purpose, strategic and long-term investment objectives, and acceptable levels of risk, providing the foundation for strategic asset allocation and performance expectations to be reviewed by committee.

- Committee further recommends that the following comprise the investment mandate:
- Adopting a long-term strategy to support sustained growth and diversification;
- Setting rules-based deposits and withdrawals to ensure predictable contributions and protection against short-term pressures;
- Applying a total portfolio approach to maintain a balanced asset mix and regularly reviewing allocations;
- Identifying and managing investment risks while pursuing long-term returns;
- Once the fund reaches a large enough value, consider a legislated inflation

proofing rule to ensure it maintains its purchasing power over time.

**Recommendation 13:** The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to establish clear rules based deposit and withdrawal provisions, including how often, how much, and under what circumstances, to ensure predictable, long term contributions that support intergenerational wealth and economic stability.

**Recommendation 14:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories assess increasing the proportion of resource revenues deposited into the Heritage Fund to ensure the fund grows at a rate capable of supporting intergenerational equity as resource revenues decline.

**Recommendation 15:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories maintain the current ban on withdrawals from the Heritage Fund beyond 2033 to allow it to reach a critical threshold.

**Recommendation 16:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act to include a clear provision that the Heritage Fund is not to be used for short-term deficit financing, and recommends inclusion of the following language into section 7:

- (1) The Heritage Fund shall not be used for the purpose of financing a short-term deficit, including but not limited to:
  - a) An operating or cash-flow deficit of the Government of the Northwest Territories;
  - b) Temporary revenue shortfalls; or
  - c) Any other short-term fiscal pressure arising within a fiscal year.
- (2) No withdrawal may be made from the Heritage Fund unless expressly authorized under this Act for a purpose consistent with the long-term objectives of the fund.

**Recommendation 17:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories enact a legislative requirement that any future amendments to the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act, or any authorization of transfers from the Heritage Fund, be approved by a special majority of Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Committee recommends replacement of section 8 with the following language:

8. No amendment to this Act, nor any authorization of transfers from the Heritage Fund, shall be valid unless approved by a special majority consisting of not less than two-thirds of all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

**Recommendation 18:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake a comprehensive review of mineral and petroleum royalties and taxation to determine whether the Northwest Territories is retaining an appropriate and equitable share of resource revenues for the benefit of its residents.

**Recommendation 19:** The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories strengthen forecasting capacity within the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Finance to improve accuracy and reliability of resource revenue projections and support long-term fiscal planning.

**Recommendation 20:** The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations in this report directed to it within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that the remainder of Committee Report 46-20(1), Standing Committee on the Government Operations Report on the Statutory Review of the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act, be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

\*deemed read - Report link

Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 46-20(1), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Statutory Review of the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act, be received and adopted by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that pursuant to Rule 9.4(5)(a), the Government of the Northwest Territories table a comprehensive response to this report, including all recommendations, within 120 days, or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees.  
Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE REPORT 47-20(1):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT'S REPORT ON  
HEALTHCARE ACCOUNTABILITY AND  
SUSTAINABILITY,  
DEEMED READ, MOVED INTO COW

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its Report on Healthcare Accountability and Sustainability and commends it to the House.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Standing Committee on Social Development presents this Report on

Healthcare Accountability and Sustainability to provide the Government of the Northwest Territories with feedback received from experts in health care. Through this report, committee aims to inform the GNWT and, beyond its release, intends to continue holding the Government accountable for adequately addressing the health care needs of residents and the pressures facing the healthcare system.

Committee received six presentations between October 2024 and March 2026. Witnesses and subject-matter experts spoke about the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers and flexible employment models to help the Northwest Territories achieve sustainable vacancy rates in healthcare staff. Experts also spoke of ways to improve upon the administrative workload and burden of healthcare staff in the territory.

Committee learned of the importance of expanding the scope of practice for certain types of nurses in the territory and to invest in the use of registered psychiatric nurses to support the NWT's mental health system. Committee highlighted nursing education programs that are needed in the territory to support the nursing profession.

Committee analyzed the current structure and reform efforts for the NWT's healthcare system, and included sentiments on the initiative of primary healthcare reform, medical travel modernization, and the small community model of care. Committee examined the efficiency of healthcare spending in the territory, one of the highest spending rates in healthcare in jurisdictions across Canada.

With the pressures of population growth and an aging demographic in the territory, identifying efficiencies in spending is crucial to further access to care.

Throughout its study, committee identified gaps in key leadership initiatives such as the 2025-2028 people strategy. Gaps in licensing and regulation were also examined, including in pan-Canadian licensure for physicians, the labour mobility of nurses, and the regulation of allied health professionals.

The delivery of healthcare services in the territory has struggled on numerous fronts in recent years, with examples such as the decline in healthcare staff across the country and continuous issues with poor coordination of medical travel and inadequate associated supports in northern and remote communities.

Committee urges the GNWT to take timely and coordinated action to implement the 27 recommendations outlined in this report. These

recommendations reflect the wishes of healthcare staff, experts, and residents of the NWT to strengthen its healthcare system.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work directly with frontline healthcare staff to incorporate their knowledge and connection to social networks into the recruitment of healthcare professionals in the Northwest Territories healthcare system.

**Recommendation 2:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories investigate and report on the feasibility of increased incentives for healthcare workers in small communities, such as subsidized rental units and designated spots at childcare centres and day homes for healthcare workers.

**Recommendation 3:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories research, identify and address barriers, including those related to privacy within the Health Information Act and related to necessary higher technology upgrades to support the timely implementation of technologies such as online booking, automated reminders for appointments, virtual care, remote ultrasound, and expanded use of artificial intelligence scribing across healthcare settings.

**Recommendation 4:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that procedures are in place for the implementation of new technologies in the healthcare system, including appropriately trained designated staff and clear processes for quick and effective application and execution.

**Recommendation 5:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories promote job sharing opportunities for healthcare professionals in the Northwest Territories, based off of Nunavut's model, as a strategy to increase the recruitment of healthcare professionals to the territory.

**Recommendation 6:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories significantly increase investments into the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority for their work in providing on-the-job education training to licensed practical nurses to further enhance the sustainability of the healthcare system and the autonomy of this type of nursing profession.

**Recommendation 7:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work with employers and licensed practical nurses to promote awareness of their changed scope of practice, and work with employers to update job descriptions to ensure that they are reflective of the regulatory scope of practice in order to provide proper support to licensed practical nurses.

**Recommendation 8:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories create a targeted initiative to expand and support the integration of nurse practitioners in small communities to improve access to timely primary care services, including ensuring that nurse practitioners have continuous and reliable access to consultations with physicians.

**Recommendation 9:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories review current job descriptions within the health and social services system to see where registered psychiatric nurses may be best utilized.

**Recommendation 10:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into the feasibility of establishing registered psychiatric nurse educational programs in the Northwest Territories that would meet the unique needs of our mental health system.

**Recommendation 11:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into the feasibility of implementing programs to address key nursing education and professional development gaps such as nursing refresher programs, nurse practitioner programs, nursing bridging programs, registered psychiatric nursing programs, midwifery programs, and prescribing and diagnoses programs in the Northwest Territories.

**Recommendation 12:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories invest in the professional development of all nurses in the Northwest Territories without reducing the allocated funding envelope for professional development for other health practitioners.

**Recommendation 13:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into potential

changes to the healthcare delivery framework in the Northwest Territories, including governance and reporting structures, with potential changes to be based on the three governance structure principles outlined in this report.

**Recommendation 14:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately reassign the initiative of organizing team-based care for frontline healthcare workers to the medical director to ensure there is a clear point person to take over the details of this initiative.

**Recommendation 15:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories develop, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Social Development, and publicly report on a plan for how team-based care will be operated in small community health centres and health cabins.

**Recommendation 16:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the Government of Canada to share or transfer some decision-making power of the Non-insured Health Benefits Program to Yellowknife, including establishing a physical office for non-insured health benefits in the North.

**Recommendation 17:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories create a bursary program for Indigenous residents of small communities and a funding program with the purpose of incentivizing residents of small communities in the Northwest Territories to pursue nursing education programs.

**Recommendation 18:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories create a marketing strategy targeting the recruitment of Indigenous residents into healthcare fields and healthcare education programs by showcasing success stories of northern Indigenous healthcare practitioners working in the health field.

**Recommendation 19:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories staff patient advocate positions in each small community of the Northwest Territories.

**Recommendation 20:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest

Territories demonstrate that the work of the healthcare systems sustainability unit and the public administrator of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is being informed by the experiences and input of frontline health practitioners to better understand where to find efficiencies in the healthcare system, such as with medical travel, and with every decision being made and reported upon, that it notes the input that has informed the decision.

**Recommendation 21:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release how many dollars can be saved by eliminating non-core services including a break down per program/service area.

**Recommendation 22:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release the methodology used by the healthcare systems sustainability unit for the evaluation of the seven program/service areas identified for initial sustainability efforts, and how they will gain an understanding of each program/service area.

**Recommendation 23:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories demonstrate costing and milestones of the 2025-2028 People Strategy and commit to an independent analysis of its results.

**Recommendation 24:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories prioritize the work of advancing a pan-Canadian licensure at the national level as well as work with the Yukon government and the Government of Nunavut to establish the tri-territorial licensing model.

**Recommendation 25:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a scholarship or bursary (similar to British Columbia) that internationally educated nurses can access in the Northwest Territories to support the cost of their Inspire assessment program with a condition that they work a certain number of years in the Northwest Territories healthcare system upon receiving the scholarship or bursary.

**Recommendation 26:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the College and Association of Nurses in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to ensure cultural

training programs are afforded to internationally educated nurses as well as cultural competencies for nurses across the board.

**Recommendation 27:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories research a regulatory model based on British Columbia's Health Professional Occupation Act with the aim of creating an arm's length regulator that encompasses a group of allied health professionals in the Northwest Territories and report on their findings.

**Recommendation 28:** The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Committee Report 47-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Healthcare Accountability and Sustainability, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that the remainder of Committee Report 47-20(1) be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Committee Report 47-20 is deemed read and will be printed in Hansard.

---Carried

\*Deemed Read,- Report link

Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** We're good? Okay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Reports of Standing Special Committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements.

Colleagues, I realize we have an hour of oral questions, so we are going to take a brief break so the translators can have a rest before we start with the next part. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Call us back to order. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. I just wanted to make a statement of personal explanation in response to a Cabin Radio report published this morning titled, MLA's Concerned About How Planned New Highways Could Affect Caribou.

So in this article, I feel that my comments were paraphrased and mischaracterized both through the subheading, too many roads, and the following paragraph, Yellowknife North MLA Shawna Morgan went further in her questioning and asked if the GNWT has considered simply not building any more roads as a means of protecting caribou.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is in fact not what I asked in the hearing last week, and my position is not that there are already too many roads. I was not and am not taking a position against the building of the Arctic Economic Security Corridor or the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I was making a point about the importance of cumulative impact assessment and how that practice of cumulative impact assessment means that we need to identify thresholds for disturbance, in this case linear disturbance which includes roads, beyond which caribou populations will suffer. So I was just urging the government to ensure that our regulatory system properly includes the practice of cumulative impact assessment so we know well ahead of time if we're approaching a threshold. And I was not suggesting that we've already reached that threshold and that we should not build any more roads. And furthermore, I just want to acknowledge too that the Indigenous people of this land have always been the primary protectors of caribou and still are, and I certainly also respect people's desire for more access to their communities. I just wanted to draw attention to the practice of cumulative impact assessment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to clarify.

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

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 1255-20(1): OFFERINGS FOR TRADES STUDENTS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ECE.

Will the Minister explain what the department is doing to reduce the need for NWT trade students to leave the territory for Alberta-based technical training? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with Aurora College who works diligently to work to expand their offering of trades programs in the Northwest Territories here. Another key part of working with -- or sorry, growing our trades offerings in the territory is making sure that these apprentices or these students have access to people that they can work with in order to gain their hours. So one of the things that we've done is create more pathways to work with people who have significant hours by creating pathways for designated trainers. So that's people with extreme hours of experience in their trade and making sure that we can connect them with students. And also working with my colleagues in other departments, for example housing and infrastructure, to make sure they have opportunities for apprentices within their departments as well. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm the most recent numbers on apprenticeship opportunities in small communities across the NWT. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that we currently have just over about 350 apprentices in the Northwest Territories. Opportunities for apprentices would not be solely tied to the Government of the Northwest Territories. For example, there is apprenticeship opportunities in both infrastructure and in housing. Housing recently increased their funding specifically to increase the number of apprentices that appear in communities and regions across the territory. But these opportunities are also made all the more accessible and viable by employers in the

territory, and so making sure that we're working with employers is a key component of this too. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Many of these apprenticeships, they get assistance from NWT SFA so I was hoping that she would give me the number but she didn't give me that number. But that's okay, we'll put it in writing.

Will the Minister commit to developing a practical pathway into the trades that allows capable residents in small communities to gain experience and build towards certification closer to home? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the Member and I are definitely aligned on this one. We've increased the pathways to trades in the life of this Assembly for NWT residents and continue to work on increasing our partnerships with employers, as well as making sure that we are improving the access to these programs through evolving the processes within education, culture and employment, and also connections through contracting within the Government of the Northwest Territories through other divisions or departments as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1256-20(1):  
CABINET SHUFFLE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to quote from unedited Hansard to prepare my question. So, Mr. Speaker, it says, I am pretty even-keeled, and I don't even make decisions based on emotion. The visceral reaction that I have to the willful neglect and disgraceful mismanagement of a system that has meant to protect vulnerable children means I couldn't look myself in the mirror if I didn't support this motion. Shame on those who didn't, and I don't know how they can sleep at night.

Mr. Speaker, that is attributed to the Premier, R.J. Simpson, with respect to the failure of the motion of the former health Minister for their removal.

Mr. Speaker, noting the AG has highlighted systemic deterioration and unaccountability, will the Premier shuffle this Minister or remove her portfolio, period? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recall making that statement. I think about it quite often. I think about where I was as a Regular Member at that time and not having the experience as a Minister or as a Premier seeing this side of government, and then just how far -- how much I've learned in the meantime about accountability and about comments that we make as Regular Members. So what we're comparing here is not apples to apples. That report was scathing. That report said that things had gotten worse, not better. The report we're dealing with now, it shows improvement. It shows that we're actually moving in the right direction as opposed to the wrong direction. It highlights there's more consistent responses to urgent situations within 24 hours. There's more regular interviews with children and families during investigation. There's an increase in Indigenous foster care providers. There's more consistent completion of key foster care documentation and evidence of prioritizing placements for the majority of children and youth with extended family or Indigenous family members. These are improvements, Mr. Speaker, and I am glad that I am working with the Minister who is advancing these improvements. So no, I am not going to shuffle Cabinet. I am not going to ask for resignation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Maybe, Mr. Speaker, I mean -- interrupting the House, maybe that's your game.

Mr. Speaker, the ultimate issue is apparently the Premier has changed his mind on accountability; Maybe it doesn't matter over there. Mr. Speaker, as pointed out by the AG, there's been non-compliance with statutory deadlines, resource management and operations. This Minister could have issued a ministerial directive, 908 days to do this, and if the Premier thinks it isn't worse then he's reading a different report.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier accept the resignation of this Minister or shuffle her? Because I tell you, the North is expecting a response.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Already asked an answered. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier demonstrate that accountability and responsibility is happening over there because of this gross mismanagement of resources? Mr. Speaker, who is going to be accountable for this

mismanagement highlighted by the Auditor General of Canada? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This side of the House never shies away from accountability and the report was -- the recommendations in the report were accepted, and they're being actioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, the 2018 report, all of them were accepted and it's worse. Mr. Speaker, the 2026 report, they're all worse. Mr. Speaker, who is going to be legally responsible for statutory rules that aren't followed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that that's laid out in legislation and the Member can have a look at that as a Regular Member. I know that he's here to hold us to account, and so I look forward to what he comes up with through his research. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 1257-20(1):  
TWIN FALLS TRAIL

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of ITI. Currently, the Twin Falls Territorial Park trail is closed due to the erosion along the riverbank. This includes five kilometres of trail between Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls, and Escarpment Creek. All three viewing platforms also remain closed.

Mr. Speaker, this is a beloved stretch of parks within the NWT that many visitors also enjoy as their introduction to the territory by road. The photos along that riverbank have been shared by NWT Parks of the erosion that's occurred between last year and this year, and they are stark. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide more details about the assessment of the Twin Falls Territorial Park trail that needs to take place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is absolutely right. The entire 5-kilometer riverside trail connecting Alexandra Falls day use area, Louise Falls campground, and Escarpment Creek camping area, including all platforms at Alexandra Falls and Louise Falls in

the Twin Falls Territorial Park are closed to the public. This is incredibly important information to get out to the public because there is ongoing erosion underneath the -- ongoing riverbank erosion, and this is also combined with the discovery of underground caverns that are causing instability and safety concerns for public access.

Mr. Speaker, if you give me a moment, please, there is a contractor that is secured to conduct geohazard and geotechnical assessment of the Twin Falls Territorial Park between Alexandra Falls and Escarpment Creek. That work will take place this summer and inform next steps. Thank you.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is good news; however, if the current trails are no longer passable would there be contemplation that they would be rebuilt closer to the highway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Member but certainly don't want to make assumptions as to what that geotechnical information may tell us. And the timeline and the action that is required will certainly depend on what information we get back from the geotechnical assessment, and I can confirm for the House that we're working closely with infrastructure on this. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that but when I hear underground caverns, that's pretty serious and alarming. So if the erosion is truly severe, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister be making further park closures and/or make them permanent? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we've taken action to close the 5-kilometre trail and also the viewing platform to make sure that the areas that we know are unsafe are closed off to the public and so we ask the public to please respect that signage. Also, with the information that we get back from the assessment that we're working on through infrastructure, we'll be able to identify if further action is required and we'll make sure that we are transparent with the public with that information as we receive it so that if there is ongoing public safety concerns, the public is aware. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1258-20(1):  
FORT GOOD HOPE CONSTRUCTION  
CENTRE

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my statement, my question today is to the Minister of Housing NWT.

The Minister of Housing NWT, can you explain when the Fort Good Hope construction facility will be completed and start building modular homes for our government as a customer. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the Fort Good Hope Construction Centre, that's not a facility owned by Housing NWT. In terms of its completion, I would speak to the Ne'Rahten Development Corporation in Fort Good Hope. But Housing NWT, we have confirmed there is work and the work on the duplexes has begun. So it's two duplexes in Fort Good Hope at the construction centre in line with Housing NWT's capital delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the reply to the Minister. Now that the project in the carpentry has started, is there in the contract or arrangement with NDLC, is there a trades training plan in place, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With Housing NWT, like Minister Cleveland indicated earlier we're working alongside all our partners and businesses to make sure that apprenticeships and there's trades training in place for all contracts with Housing NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks for that reply. It's good to know that the young people have a training plan targeted for trades.

My last question, will the department continue supporting this industry once the Build Canada Homes fund is in place by supporting further funding to that enterprise? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Build Canada Homes, it's going to advance housing across the Northwest Territories. Currently, we're negotiating an agreement with Build Canada Homes. And with that, once that agreement comes into place with Housing NWT, we will reach out to all partners,

including the Fort Good Hope Construction Centre, to advance projects needed across the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1259-20(1):  
CHILDREN IN CARE IN OTHER  
JURISDICTIONS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of children in child care across the Northwest Territories, and we also have children from the Northwest Territories in care in other jurisdictions, with families trying to desperately get them back within a culturally safe environment where families can care for them.

How can the Minister and her department assist families who have children in care in another jurisdiction, children who were taken -- who are under the local bands and have been taken away under false pretenses, how can the Minister assist these families? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I don't have that level of detail at my fingertips. I appreciate the Member's concern on this issue. As I stated, the majority of Indigenous children are now in care with Indigenous families but I understand that there are still situations where that's not possible and is not possible within the territory. So I will have to get back to the Member with that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain what procedures are currently followed when a child is in another jurisdiction other than the Northwest Territories and the family is trying to get them back into a culturally safe environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, I will have to get back to the Member with that information. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How does the department prioritize culturally appropriate family and community-based placements with Indigenous children before considering a licensed foster care placement with non-Indigenous caregivers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of work has been done to ensure that children can be supported, ideally before they're removed from a family. And so more than ever now, families are receiving support. So Indigenous families with their Indigenous children are receiving support as the first option prior to looking at the decision to remove a child. So that work is happening, and that work has really expanded the level of support that is being provided and it has prevented a number of children from being removed, which was what would have occurred prior to that. And as I said as well, there's always a priority to look at family and extended family to ensure that children stay as close to home and with relatives, and again, focusing on ensuring that there is as much cultural continuity as possible in placing children with Indigenous caregivers at any time possible. And we've seen an increase in the number of Indigenous foster care providers as well. So work is happening and it is progressing and we are seeing results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 1260-20(1):  
NAVIGATING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today this House heard the devastating reality of a born and raised Northerner and occupational therapist who has been explicitly advised by health and social services to abandon her home due to our healthcare system being unable to provide the case management and home nutrition supports she needs to survive.

Can the Minister explain to this House how that is acceptable, that a specialized frontline healthcare worker, who are in short supply, Mr. Speaker, is being told by her own physicians that she has no choice but to leave the NWT for care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I obviously can't speak about an individual's medical situation in the House. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, this has become a public concern. It's been reported by two major news outlets in the Northwest Territories; I would hope we'd have a better answer. A major barrier to my constituent's care is the inflexible nature of interprovincial health agreements of which the Premier has direct say as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. What immediate

action will the Minister take to renegotiate our healthcare agreements, specifically with Alberta, to ensure that NWT residents with complex medical needs no longer fall through the cracks?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I thought we were talking about case management of an individual, now we're talking about intergovernmental relations. This is sort of going all over the place and without any heads-up on this, I am going to have to take these questions on notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1261-20(1):  
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will start with questions for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

So the environmental monitoring advisory board, or EMAB, is a watchdog providing independent oversight to both the operator of the Diavik diamond mine and its regulators. It's made up of representatives from Lutselk'e Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Tlicho government, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, and some of those groups have very limited capacity on their own to make regulatory submissions or publish their concerns about the mine. So given that the Diavik mine is finished production now, the Minister is contemplating shutting down EMAB thus relieving Diavik of its responsibility to fund EMAB whereas EMAB is advocating for its important role to continue throughout the closure process.

My first question, has the Minister considered the option of having EMAB decrease its activity gradually over time in line with the expected gradual scaling down of long-term monitoring and maintenance at the mine? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ECC has received a request from Diavik to set a schedule for winding down EMAB and under section 18.3 of the environmental assessment, once Diavik has ceased operations, as the Member has indicated, the Minister may, at their discretion, relieve Diavik of these responsibilities. So as Minister, I've -- as required under section 18.3, I am required to consult with all parties and the

advisory board before rendering a decision. And I've launched a consultation process with these parties on the agreement and plan to make a decision on Diavik's request in the not too distant future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So does the Minister take the position that the role of EMAB could be replaced going forward by the co-management regulatory boards or perhaps individual community governments acting on their own throughout the closure phase? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated I have an obligation to consult with all parties before rendering a decision. So I've launched that consultation process, and it would be premature for me to take a position at this time. So once the consultation process is complete, I will be required to make that decision on Diavik's request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So then can the Minister at least tell us, will the Minister release his decision publicly, including the evidence and reasoning used to make that decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once this process has concluded and I've made a decision, I will release that decision to all parties as well as the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 1262-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I could, normally if we're away from the House we give notice. I just want to know, my Member's statement was based to the health Minister. I am not sure what to do there, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh, we don't recognize people are in and out. You ask the question and I will direct it to the appropriate Minister. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, audit after audit proves that this government cannot manage child and

family services. Given the federal recognition of Indigenous jurisdiction under Bill C-92, an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families, does the Minister accept that the long-term role of the territorial government is to transition out of the child and family services agreement governance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've been quite clear that the long-term goal of myself, at least, is to see Indigenous governments, Indigenous self-governments, take over authority in all sorts of different areas, including child and family services. So I want to move in that direction. We are moving in that direction. There's agreements in place already, and I hope there's more to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the Minister doing to support Indigenous governments in building the capacity they require to assume full jurisdiction over child and family services under Bill C-92 as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as has been stated, there already is an agreement in place. The Inuvialuit are undertaking this and work is going forward. We are working across the NWT with Indigenous governments to advance self-government agreements, to work towards settling land claims. We have forums like the NWT Council of Leaders where we discuss issues like child and family services so that we can have better understanding of where different Indigenous governments are and where they would like to move forward. So, Mr. Speaker, this is an area that we are seeing progress, and I think we're leading the country in this area. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the government's plans and timeline for implementing the transfer of child and family services authority to Indigenous governments under Bill C-92? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The timelines belong to the Indigenous governments who would want to take on that authority. That's not something we would ever impose. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member from Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1263-20(1):  
DEH CHO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that the GNWT will comply with the interim measures agreement signed in 2001 by stating clearly that there will be no sales or leases of any kind in the Deh Cho territory without the support of affected Deh Cho First Nations communities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I was asked this question by a regional chief in the Deh Cho, and there's an agreement that was signed by the federal government, by the Minister -- the territorial Minister of Indigenous affairs at that time and by the grand chief of the Deh Cho, and yes, I would -- of course, I am going to honour that agreement.

The Member's question talked about requiring support, and there are provisions in the interim measures agreement that state that support is required on certain transfers and in other instances, it's prior consultation. But we are committed to following that interim measures agreement, and I have told the grand chief if there are any issues that arise please let me know, because I want to stay on top of it and make sure that we're honouring it. Thank you.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is will the Premier establish a system of joint decision-making on proposed land dispositions in the Deh Cho territory as he has publicly given his support to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know I've been asked to do such a thing. I haven't given support to the proposal. What I want to do is move forward with the land claim and come to an agreement so that we can settle once and for all the administration in the region as opposed to coming up with interim steps that also need to be negotiated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier issue his negotiators with a new and clear mandate to support Deh Cho First Nations in their efforts to establish a public government in the Deh Cho that represents the legitimate claims of the original inhabitants of the Deh Cho and the security of their communities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had a number of meetings with the grand

chief, the negotiators, about the Deh Cho process, about their concerns, about what issues they see as outstanding. And the purpose of those meetings was to educate myself so that when proposals are brought forward to the negotiating table that I'd have a better understanding of what -- of the context. And so what needs to happen now is that proposals need to be brought forward at the table for consideration. I can't give direction to agree to a broad principle. There's a lot of detail that needs to be worked out, and the place that gets worked out is at the negotiating table. I've expressed to my team that I want to hear those proposals and as soon as those proposals are made by the Deh Cho negotiators, we will consider them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1264-20(1):  
LESSONS LEARNED ON MINE LICENSES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a few questions of the Minister for ECC following up with some of the things I was asking about last week. Mr. Speaker, I'd just note that it's been in the news that the De Beers company is currently up for sale. Can the Minister detail any lessons learned or changes to process which may inform assignment proceedings if the Gahcho Kue license were the subject of an assignment application? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, mine assets or corporations are not something that the GNWT would have authority to influence. You know, this also applies to corporate restructuring or sales processes. These are private. If the requirement under ECC would be for the company to provide applicable forms of security for their operation and if the company is not able to post these applicable forms of security to the GNWT, then we would not recommend to the land and water board that the license or permits be assigned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer, and the Minister is going in the direction that I was as well, and that is just noting that, you know, there's -- you know, in cases where these sales go down, as we've seen in this territory through the example of Ekati, sometimes it's taken on by a smaller company who has less financial capacity. I am just wondering if the Minister is thinking about that issue, how it might relate to

De Beers, and how the government can best mitigate any negative consequences from such an assignment taking place and ensure that the public is not held liable for the cleanup of the site. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so the Department of ECC works closely with the land and water boards in the assignment of security requirements for any different company or corporation in the Northwest Territories. We provide information and recommendations but ultimately it is the land and water board that sets the level of security required, so we will continue to work together in that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister currently confident that the amount of security held for the De Beers site is adequate to cover reclamation costs? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently do not have a final closure plan. The security that was provided by De Beers is based on the recommendation of the land and water board which had input from environment and climate change, and we will evaluate that as the final reclamation and closure plan is determined. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 1265-20(1):  
SUPPORTS FOR ADDICTIONS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a statement from yesterday.

Can the Minister provide the current average wait time between a completed addiction treatment application and the person actually entering treatment. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I don't have that level of detail at my fingertips. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain what immediate intervention options exist when a person is no longer making safe decisions

because of addictions, and what families can do before it is too late. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's a very important question and I think as MLAs we often deal with situations like that. Families come to us where there's a loved one who has gone down a path that is scaring the family and people are worried for their well-being, so I want to make sure that I get the Member all the details so I will get back to the Member with a written response on that. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Can the Minister commit to reviewing stronger addiction intervention approaches used in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and other jurisdictions, to determine what tools could be adapted to better respond to addiction crisis in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know that Alberta is, you know, doing different things with addictions. I don't have all the details about what they're doing so I am going to -- once again, I will get back to the Member with a written response on that one. I think it's another important avenue that we need to explore. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1266-20(1):  
NON-COMPLIANCE OF STATUTORY  
DEADLINES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Myself and -- my colleagues and myself I should say, that we have a lot of questions on the health and social services file with respect to the child and family services. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is taking these questions. Maybe the Premier could explain to this House why the health Minister isn't taking these questions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Yellowknife Centre, I am the one directing the questions therefore it was me that has given the questions to the Premier. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has pointed out that this rosy report on the 2026 auditor general -- I should say report exists. I challenge him to table it because we're reading two different reports. So my question specifically is back to non-compliance of statutory deadlines.

The law explicitly mandates that an allegation of suspected child maltreatment are received and assessed within 24 hours. Will the Premier look at the situation and explain what's the difference between systematic breach and his idea of everything is fine? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall saying everything is fine because everything is obviously not fine. I am not going to mischaracterize the situation. I don't want to exaggerate things. I want to stick to the facts, stick to what the report says. And a number of the comments the Member made, I don't know where he heard those; they weren't words that came out of my mouth so it's really hard to respond when the premise of the question is not on solid ground. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, if the Premier doesn't want to answer a question and find every little tweak, I mean it is what it is, Mr. Speaker. But the truth be told is the facts still stand out there.

Mr. Speaker, by law, the department must assess child abuse within 24 hours yet there are several files that show that it's an average of 16 days and 71 percent failure rate to meet the investigation deadline. Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier stand there and not take accountability for the systematic violation of our own statutory deadline? What are we going to do, and is he going to shuffle the Minister? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Two questions there; both were previously asked and answered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 1267-20(1):  
SAFETY OF ROADS ALONG RIVER  
SYSTEM

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, these questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, building on my last set of questions for the Minister of ITI.

So Highway No. 1 from the Alberta-NWT border to Enterprise includes this 5-kilometre stretch alongside the trail. And so my question to the Minister then is, is the highway that brings people into the territory, brings supply chains into the territory, safe to drive? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this section of road is an area that is being monitored. All our road systems in the Northwest Territories are safe to drive. We are aware of the situation. It's been monitored for the last little while. And, you know, the whole river system into Hay River is always a concern so we always monitor that section, including a few other parts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so hearing earlier today that there are underground caverns developing along this stretch, Mr. Speaker, is rerouting the highway an option if geotechnical assessment requires it? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is definitely an option. There is room for a realignment and there's the option of looking at one if there's an opportunity or if there's a case where we have to move the road. So the department's currently looking at that as we speak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so in the sense that geotechnical can sometimes take a while and this seems to be moving fast from last year to the next, is there any contingency plans that the Minister has for the road should it become unsafe? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is, you know, one that's become very public but as somebody who's grown up in the area, it happens quite often along that river system, and it is a section that is close to the road however we are monitoring it. There is room to relocate the road, and if there's a possibility that we have to do it in an emergency situation, there is the ability and the room to do that. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1268-20(1):  
IMPROVISED DRUG PARAPHERNALIA

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at a town hall on crime and public safety that the Minister of Justice attended, one of the attendees brought a bag of improvised crack pipes that she purchased -- that she said she purchased at a local store in downtown Yellowknife. This is very concerning to us, to the RCMP, and of course to the community. Can the Minister speak to why improvised

paraphernalia -- this is glass pipes and steel wool -- is allowed to be sold in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information on the specific question that the Member has asked directly in front of me, but I am happy to get a response back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue. This is a longstanding one that's known anecdotally throughout the community. We hear about it all the time. Will the Minister take steps to investigate these concerns that have been brought forward by the community at that town hall and since; will the Minister take steps to investigate this and find legal remedies to prevent the sale of dangerous drug paraphernalia in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I've stood here many times and relayed my commitment to the Northwest Territories on my opinion around drugs and drug-related crime in the Northwest Territories. I am happy to look into the legality of selling this material in a corner store and will bring that information back to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that commitment. Mr. Speaker, this could also be dealt with at the municipal level but I have heard loud and clear from our friends at the City of Yellowknife that they don't want more downloaded to them. So would the Minister also reach out to the City of Yellowknife and see how he can support the city in addressing this issue should it come to that? Essentially, if we find out that this is more of a bylaw issue, will the Minister find ways to support the city to make sure that they are not left solely responsible for cleaning up this problem, which is very much people preying on the drug crisis. It is totally inappropriate and not in line with our values as a community. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly have indicated that I am willing to look into this to see what the legality of it is. We're not sure where it may fall in the process. So happy to do that, take that information, share that information, not only with the City of Yellowknife but with other affected communities across the Northwest Territories and see how we can work

together to find a solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1269-20(1):  
CAMP CONNECTIONS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

So we've seen recently in the news that Camp Connections, which is the camp that has been run by the Foster Family Coalition for, you know, many children in care and others, that it has been cancelled for this summer and the general message that has been put out there is that it's due to either a lack of or some kind of cut in GNWT funding. And so I wonder if the Minister can clarify first, was the cancellation of this camp due to some cut or reduction in GNWT funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So Camp Connections has been funded through the anti-poverty fund historically, which is an application-based program. The eligibility requirements for that program have not changed so there have been no program changes. It's something that every year the coalition applies for. This year there were, as there generally is, many more requests for funding than there are funds and, unfortunately, the application received was not complete and we went back, asked for more information, and by the time we received that information the period had closed and decisions had already been made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so I know we've heard many testimonials from people who have attended the camp or worked at the camp and just how valuable and meaningful it was to them. Has the Minister perhaps worked with any other departments such as HSS to see if there could be any funding available to support sending children who are associated with the Foster Family Coalition, and certainly need our love and support, to help get this camp or something similar up and running again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in the middle of last month, health was informed by the Foster Family Coalition that they would not be proceeding with the overnight camp but that they would be looking to do some

day programming. And at that time there wasn't a request for additional funding. Since the news articles have come out though, we've become aware of the situation from their perspective. And so we have -- health has reached out to look at -- to start a conversation about what other options might be available to get the overnight camp going. And from what I understand they're just waiting to hear back to continue those conversations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1270-20(1):  
WELLNESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE  
STATUS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, continuing with the Member's statement that I raised today on behalf of my youth -- or sorry, the Frame Lake Youth Parliamentarian, I wanted to ask some questions of the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, what is the status of the wellness and recovery centre being built in Yellowknife. I know it was supposed to be finished in 2023; we're now in 2026. Can the Premier give us some good news today about when we might actually see that up and running.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Construction started in 2024. We expect construction to conclude later this year and for the building to become ready for occupancy in early 2027. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I am sure my constituent and Youth Parliamentarian will be happy to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, is the government leading or funding any efforts to establish addictions counselling and treatment in the territory as argued for by our youth and by so many members of this Assembly and by the public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course there are counsellors throughout the territory employed by the department of -- or by the health authorities, and so there's funding there. We also have the mental wellness and addictions recovery fund, I believe it's called. There's \$3 million there, and that is to support Indigenous governments and communities to provide counselling services in their communities, and that could be on-the-land counselling. There's -- I won't say whether or

not there's still money in there. I believe there could still be some funds available. And so we always encourage Indigenous governments especially to apply when we have bilateral agreements, or at the Council of Leaders we always talk about this as a way for treatment to be delivered in the communities. Of course, we also fund sending people to treatment centres if they're at that point in their life. We have detox beds at Stanton here. So there are a number of things that are happening. We're also supporting the Endacho Healing Society as they move towards -- work towards establishing a trauma healing centre in the territory. And, of course, we supported the Dene Wellness Warriors to bring a number of NWT residents through a program that they're putting on so that they could work in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for that answer. Mr. Speaker, finally, what additional supports for people experiencing homelessness have been established by this government in our community? Thank you. Of Yellowknife.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to step on the Minister of housing's toes but I can do a few remarks on this.

So a lot of work has gone into this area as well. The overnight shelters across the territory have seen pretty significant increases in their operating budget. Because I think we were expecting them to operate for a year on a shoestring budget that was unreasonable, and so we've made significant increases to that. Of course here in Yellowknife, there is the transitional housing that has been set up down by the Folk on the Rocks site. Last time I heard there were 22 individuals in there, and that many more had passed through. So there have been additional supports as well. We have supported the overnight shelters, like at the Salvation Army and other places in Yellowknife, to ensure there's beds available. So for example this winter, there were enough overnight beds for anyone who needed them, and there was actually excess most nights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 1271-20(1):  
STATUS OF SELF GOVERNMENT  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLVILLE LAKE

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we are drawing near our spring sitting here, my

question today -- my additional question here today is to the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs on the status of the self-government negotiations and conclusions here with the Behdzi Ahda Dene community in Colville on self-government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so in Colville Lake, the Dehla Got'ine self-government negotiations have continued. It was just last year, December I believe, when a consultation draft of an agreement was completed. And so that has gone out for consultation with the other potentially affected Indigenous groups. I believe it should be -- the last estimate I heard was it would take about nine months, and so we're hoping September/October that those should be done. There's ongoing work with the implementation plan, the financing agreement, and the tax treatment agreement. There's internal work on the community borders. There's some land transfer issues that we're working on. And yeah, I will leave it at that for now. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suspect there's a time schedule. Will the Premier or the Minister share the schedule for concluding this agreement. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So consultation is expected to, as I mentioned, be completed September/October, sometime around then, and then it has to be ratified. And so there's a process by which all the parties have to ratify the agreement. That is -- I don't have the detail on how long that will take. It is variable. We're dealing with a -- I will say it's variable, and we want to ensure that the communities have the time they need to do the ratification, to travel -- or to have the community meetings and make sure everyone understands it. So I don't necessarily have a timeline but things are progressing. They're progressing at a good pace, and all parties are committed to advancing this and concluding it as soon as possible. So this is definitely a good news story. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is, I guess we can expect that the conclusion will happen for the remaining term of this Assembly, is that true? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there's some parts of this that are out of my control but I would love to see that happen this term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1272-20(1):  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Child and family services have apprehended children in cases where parental rights and custody agreements were still before the courts despite the safety of the children. How does child and family services have the authority to take such action prior to pending court decisions without any emergency taking place? This is a question to the Minister of health. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, just ask the question. I will redirect it to the appropriate person. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, I mean, there's a lot of information there. There was a lot of assumptions in that that I am not familiar with. I don't know the specific instances the Member is speaking of offhand so I would have to look further into that one. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right before a constituent of mine was able to settle their custodial rights in court, on the same day as that court appointment child and family services apprehended their baby who was in care of their grandparents and sent the child across the country. How can child and family services intervene in situations where a child is in stable kinship and care arrangement and determine custody before the courts have reached a decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Child and Family Services Act spells out the authorities involved in this area. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A constituent of mine returned home after completing a successful journey of healing and treatment and was preparing for court to determine custody rights anticipating reunification yet child and family services apprehended the children right there at the airport. How is that consistent with the agenda of reunifying families when CFS did not wait for the court to make its determination before taking their children from them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So obviously I can't speak about a specific case, especially -- well first of all, I can't speak

about a specific case, not in the House, and there's obviously more details that would be required to provide a fulsome answer to that if there was the appropriate authority to provide that answer publicly. So, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, just given the nature of the question I can't speak to it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 1273-20(1):  
CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLIC TENDERS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Pursuant to section 10.1.4 of the Gwich'in modern day treaty and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement indicates the following: Where government carries out public activities in the Gwich'in settlement area which give rise to employment or other economic opportunities and government elects to enter into contracts with respect to those activities and the Government of the Northwest Territories preferential contracting policies, procedures, and approaches intended to maximize local, regional, and northern employment and business opportunities shall be followed respectively by Canada or the Government of the Northwest Territories. Does this government recognize claimant groups within the NWT where economic opportunities can benefit companies within the settlement areas? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this topic is before the courts, I am unable to answer that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Prior to submitting public tenders within settlement areas within the Northwest Territories, does the Government of the Northwest Territories consult with the impacted claimant groups? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Again, Mr. Speaker, a lot of this topic that he is discussing is before the courts however any of our contracts or projects that we're doing usually go out to public tender, as we do with all public funds. This has the ability for anybody in the areas that the work is under to bid on the project or the program in an open, transparent process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not specify any specific claimant group or contract. I don't know what the Minister is referring to. But will the Minister consult with claimant groups now and in the future prior to a public tender? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't control all the programs for the Indigenous governments. We do a lot of work with the Council of Leaders and work with all the Indigenous governments however, again, like I said earlier when it comes down to any of the projects that we're doing, we use a tendering process through an open, transparent program. And this is available for anybody to bid on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Colleagues, the time is up for oral questions. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 528-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 49:  
SAFER COMMUNITY AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 529-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
49: SAFER COMMUNITY AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 530-20(1):  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON PUBLIC  
SAFETY LEGISLATION: WHAT WE HEARD  
REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 531-20(1):  
REVIEW OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES  
ACT: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents: Plain Language Summary of Bill 49: Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act; Statement of Consistency for Bill 49: Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act; Public Engagement on Public Safety Legislation: What We Heard Report; and, Review of the Residential Tenancies Act: What We Heard Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Tabling of documents. Member from Yellowknife North.

TABLED DOCUMENT 532-20(1):  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION  
MATTERS 20TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
DRAFT TERMS

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Draft Terms of Reference for the Special Committee on Transition Matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 533-20(1):  
CANCER CARE VISION: A LIVING  
FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY AND  
PRIORITIES IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Cancer Care Vision, A Living Framework for Quality and Priorities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Tabling of documents. Member from Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 534-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
51: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LOCAL  
AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS ACT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Statement of Consistency for Bill 51-20(1), An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 81-20(1):  
REORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL AND  
HEALTH GOVERNANCE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Range Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories take the necessary steps to restructure the current Department of

Health and Social Services into two distinct departments:

1. A department of health focused on clinical services, primary care, and public health; and
2. A department of social services focused on child and family services, mental health and addictions, and community well-being;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories transfer all income support programs and relevant social policy functions from other departments to the newly established Department of Social Services to ensure an integrated wraparound service delivery model.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 82-20(1):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO OCTOBER 20, 2026

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two notices of motion. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June -- just one at a time, okay.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when the House adjourns on Thursday, June 4, 2026, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, October 20, 2026;

And further, that any time prior to October 20, 2026, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier or later time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice;

And thereupon, the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 83-20(1):  
REAPPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY  
COMMISSIONER

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that pursuant to Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories the reappointment of Mr. David Phillip Jones as Integrity Commissioner, effective June 3, 2026.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion later today. Thank you.

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

MOTION 84-20(1)  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION MATTERS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that pursuant to Rule 9.2(8), the Legislative Assembly hereby establish a Special Committee on Transition Matters;

And further, that the following Members be named to the Special committee:

- Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya, Member for Deh Cho;
- Mr. Julian Morse, Member for Frame Lake;
- Mr. George Nerysoo, Member for Mackenzie Delta;
- Honourable Lucy Kuptana, Member for Nunakput;
- Mr. Daniel McNeely, Member for Sahtu; and
- Honourable Jay MacDonald, Member for Thebacha.

And furthermore, that the Special Committee on Transition Matters be established by the terms of reference identified as Tabled Document 532-20(1). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 85-20(1):  
CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that this Legislative Assembly formally censures the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Honourable Lesa Semmler, for her poor performance as Minister of Health and Social Services and her failure to uphold the operational and accountability standards required of her portfolio. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Motions**

MOTION 83-20(1):  
REAPPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY  
COMMISSIONER,  
CARRIED

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice earlier today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Member from Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent to address the motion that he mentioned under notices of motion. Any nays? Seeing no nays, you may proceed.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, colleagues.

WHEREAS Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint an Integrity Commissioner to exercise the powers and perform the duties set out in the Act;

AND WHEREAS the appointment of the current Integrity Commissioner, Mr. David Phillip Jones, expires on June 1, 2026;

AND WHEREAS Section 91(4) of the Act provides that the Commissioner continue to hold office after the expiry of his or her term of office until the person is reappointed, and a successor is appointed, or a period of six months has expired;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of the Integrity Commissioner essential to exercise the powers and perform the duties under the Act,

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner, effective June 2, 2026, should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kam Lake, that pursuant to Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories the reappointment of Mr. David Phillip Jones as Integrity Commissioner, effective June 3rd, 2026. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

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

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 50: MARINE TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION ACT

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 50, Marine Transportation Corporation Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 50 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Member from Frame Lake.

#### BILL 51: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS ACT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to present Bill 51, An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 51 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

#### BILL 52: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2026-2027

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 52 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Second Reading of Bills

#### BILL 49: SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, CARRIED

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 49, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, be read for the second time.

The proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act will provide civil mechanisms to stop illegal activities that occur habitually at residential rental properties and negatively affect the safety of the community and the well-being of residents. Commonly referred to as the SCAN Act, the proposed bill is designed to empower residents to report problem residences in their community and includes provisions to protect confidentiality and vulnerable persons.

The proposed bill is based, in part, on current best practices from other jurisdictions, like the Yukon and Saskatchewan, with specific elements that work in the NWT context and scale to create a unique made-in-the-NWT SCAN system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principal of the bill. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few words to share about my thoughts and some thoughts I've heard from constituents about this bill prior to it being referred to the committee.

Mr. Speaker, SCAN stands out as being distinct from the other two pieces of public safety legislation which were shown, those being the

Civil Forfeiture and the Trespass Act. They were kind of presented as a tripartite set of legislation on public safety by the government. Those two pieces were shown to be common to other jurisdictions and had established precedent to serve as an example of their utility. SCAN is unique in that it has not been widely adopted across Canada. Rather, there are a mix of jurisdictions with it and without it. And, furthermore, research has shown that results where it has been adopted are also mixed.

And, interestingly, Mr. Speaker, responses to the government's engagement on the legislation were mixed as well. I want to read a little bit from the What We Heard report that the government published on SCAN.

The What We Heard report found that feedback on SCAN legislation showed support for having tools to deal with problem properties along with concerns about whether the law could do more harm than good. Participants expressed frustration with known drug houses operating openly in their communities and supported stronger enforcement options. And I certainly understand where that frustration is coming from and the desire to see this legislation as a result. At the same time, many questioned whether SCAN would truly address organized criminal activities or whether it would more likely affect vulnerable residents whose properties are exploited while serious traffickers simply move elsewhere.

Written submissions showed strong polarization. And that's the words of the What We Heard report itself. Social service organizations and housing advocates strongly opposed SCAN, while some Indigenous governments and business groups expressed strong support. Survey respondents were evenly split on whether SCAN would be effective, even though most agreed that problem properties are a serious concern. So nobody's disagreeing that problem properties are a concern, and certainly I don't disagree with that, Mr. Speaker. The question is how to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, I had our research team do a detailed jurisdictional review on this. I wanted to understand more about jurisdictions that have implemented SCAN and the successes or lack thereof that they've had, and a detailed jurisdictional review suggested that SCAN-style legislation can provide governments and enforcement agencies with an additional civil tool to address properties associated with repeated unlawful activity; however, the jurisdictional SCAN does not show strong or consistent public evidence that SCAN regimes have reduced drug-related crime or improved long-term community safety.

The responses also repeatedly raised concerns that these measures may shift harms onto tenants and other vulnerable populations particularly where housing insecurity, addiction, or civil liberties concerns are already significant. Notably, my research also found that an aspect of Yukon's SCAN legislation was found unconstitutional with reporting emphasizing concerns about procedural fairness, psychological harm, and the risk of homelessness for affected residents.

And, certainly, Mr. Speaker, I have met with residents of the encampment that exists in my riding. I would note that in some cases the situations that we are talking about here with SCAN are exactly what led people to be homeless, and I think it's important to think about that, the impacts that evicting people can have. People do end up having to go somewhere. They end up somewhere. Often it's in things like encampments. People do need a place to go even if they have been evicted for good reason.

I want to note that several constituents have approached me to raise concerns about the adoption of SCAN legislation here in the territory. I have also heard support for it I want to be clear, but the balance of comments I've received thus far have fallen to the side which is concern and not supportive of it.

I would also note that, interestingly, common among these residents who have raised concern is that they lived in a jurisdiction where it was implemented, and it was seen by them to do more harm than good. This really does give me pause, and I greatly appreciate constituents reaching out to me to share their thoughts on this and encourage them to continue to do so whether they're supportive or not. I want to hear from people on what they feel about this. I think the committee review of this is going to be interesting.

I do not want in any way to diminish the concerns and frustrations my colleagues and members of the public have shared concerning the impact of drugs in their communities. I share those concerns as well. Where I raise concern here is in keeping with what public has shared so far. Results of SCAN legislation elsewhere have been mixed, and there's not a lot of evidence to show that it has necessarily been effective at reducing drug use or crime. That's where I am concerned.

As this is a government bill, and I know there is some strong support for bringing this forward, I expect this bill to pass second reading and proceed to committee review today. I am taking the position I am, which is not supportive of the bill, to ensure my constituents who have raised

concerns feel heard and their concerns are noted on the record for committee as they will soon be proceeding with their review, as I am convinced. I am not at this time sure that SCAN will be a positive step for our territory, and I am going to be monitoring committee's review of this bill carefully with the hope that concerns being raised about this legislation might be alleviated by thoughtful amendments and review of the bill.

So I certainly support the committee in reviewing the bill, but at this time the balance of comments I've heard from my constituents have been that they are concerned about it, they do not want to see me supporting it, and that's how I will be voting today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the principal of the bill. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be as eloquent as my colleague. I will take up far less time and I will keep it brief.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting second reading. I will be following committee's work with earnest interest. I do not have any constituents who have come to me and said that they are against the bill. I think what I've heard mainly is they have reservations and concerns with what that might look like so that is why I will be spending time with social development to understand the implications of this bill.

I have heard also from residents of Yellowknife that they would much prefer the tools be given to the residential tenancies office. They're not entirely certain why a new office is required to be created to solve this problem and indeed I share those same concerns.

And although I hear my colleagues on this side of the House loud and clear that they want this to proceed, I am not certain at this point whether this legislation can live up to their expectations and how they're looking at it to solve problems that they see. But, again, I think that that investigation by committee can help look into those questions and reservations that I have.

I also share concerns that my colleagues spoke to about evictions creating knock-on problems, such as homelessness, and so I hope that committee does study that as well.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I will defer to the good work of committee that I know is ahead of them, and I will support second reading. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the principle of the bill. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to note that we need to give our our system -- I will say it that way -- every opportunity to stand up to crime and I think -- so speaking to the principle of the bill is this is very important that we provide that enhanced tool to provide those challenges and tools so we can meet them upfront. No one is suggesting that this is a perfect tool but what we are suggesting is the committee hopefully will provide some advice and regulations will make it as perfect or reasonable as possible.

Mr. Speaker, a fair road is still ahead of us on the review of this particular initiative, but primarily coming from the community is they want something in response to these challenges. People can blame their woes on this and that but one of the things that we're certainly seeing is that there are elements of fighting crime or confronting crime has slowly been seeping forward or moving forward in this government -- Thankfully something's happening -- so this tool could be helping deal with these broader issues.

Now this is not a social services tool. Let us be clear. This is a tool to deal with problems with crime in the community. It is not a tool, if I understand it correctly, that will be used by the RCMP. It will have a civil action process which is much swifter than a criminal process to address this. Will there be bumps and bangs along the way? I suspect there will be but I suspect no legislation is perfect. Clearly, we've seen challenges with others, which we've discussed earlier today without going into any detail of course, Mr. Speaker.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I support any public safety community initiative that helps allow people to feel safe in their communities and furthermore feel that the system itself is stepping up and protecting them. There are many seniors who've come to me to complain and exercise frustration that they do not feel enough is being done. This particular legislation is yet one more step forward. I don't know if we require more types of legislation to move forward. I don't know, but time will tell. But the important factor is -- and I want to leave with this -- this is inching the problem forward in a way towards a solution, and every step or every little inch we take working on this is good. Because people feel that their communities have been taken away from them. Seniors tell me they are not safe. Parents are telling me they're uncomfortable with their children out there with some of the risks that we see today. And there's always this feeling of hopelessness

that the general public tells me that they feel the system is not there for them; it's more worried about the violators of good public responsibility. It's the sense that they feel that that is perceived as more important than kids playing on the streets, people feeling safe walking home, people knowing that their neighbourhoods are good.

Yes, there will be a whole lot of concerns about providing addiction processes. That's a broader picture. Housing processes, I agree with those as well. But they are not this legislation. This is about taking streets back. Mr. Speaker, and I will finish off by saying I'd like to see a recorded vote on this reading. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the principal of the bill. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the second reading of this SCAN legislation. I came back from my home community prior to session and there have been a lot of concern around the community and the residents of even having their children play outside during broad daylight because there's activities going on within public housing units. The tenants are hiding behind these doors. Everybody in the community know where these drug dealers that come from out of the community into our community and pose threat on our residents, especially the children when they can't even play outside in broad daylight. There's people walking around but police are not doing anything about it. I think this will be a good tool to give the authorities to try and stop the illegal trade of alcohol or drugs.

It's more evident in these smaller communities where I come from. Even sitting here in Yellowknife, I get calls saying they're at this place, and I know where they're at. So we have to give the authorities more tools to deal with that, especially the drug situation. I haven't seen it this bad before, and it's the younger generation that's being plagued with this crisis. So I will be supporting the second reading of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. To the principle of the bill. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting this bill here, or this second reading. One of the main reasons, several years ago that I wanted to sit on the social development committee was to help our communities, and this is a means I see in helping our communities for a safer environment for all ages of that community and the rest of our community. So in short, Mr.

Speaker, I look forward to my continued working with the colleagues to support SCAN. Mahsi.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the 20th Assembly's priorities is talking about public safety, and we have four priorities. And we all know that we are in a drug crisis right now in our communities in the Northwest Territories, and that's something that we've never seen for a long time where I've been to so many funerals as the MLA and former chief and band councillor in my lifetime, and it's really hitting home. And this bill and second reading, it's something I support right from day one. It's to give the RCMP more tools needed to do their jobs in our communities. I know that we had problems -- big problems in public housing where drug dealers are coming into our community and taking over these units, and it's a scary situation, you know, where I hear firsthand from the RCMP, you know, the seriousness of these problems we're having in the community with drug activities and weapons and so on. It's a big problem. You know, like here in Yellowknife, when I think back going back to early 80s, we never thought about that, that we had a problem then. But when you look back now, it's a big problem in our community. So, you know, I know that we have drug problems in our public housing units and then RCMP will come in and, you know, evict -- or housing will come in and evict the individuals because of the drug activity. I know that there's still gaps in our system to address the housing crisis we have in our community as well but -- and to deal with homelessness, etcetera. But, Mr. Speaker, to this government and the 20th Assembly made public safety a top priority, one of their top four priorities. And so the way I look at it, this second reading it only gives more tools to the RCMP needed to do their job so therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this second reading of this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the principle of the bill. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to what my colleagues have said, I know that when we first started, public safety was on our agenda. It is a priority for this government. So I do appreciate this bill.

Living in the small communities, you know, there's a lot of issues. There's a lot of issues with drugs and crimes that we have never seen

before. And it's -- you know, the stats in the Northwest Territories, especially for crimes, is bad. Now it's going to be even more worse than what is presented. So even my colleagues talk about the public housing. Yes, the public housing, we can use this legislation but for private dwellings, the drug dealers are moving into private dwellings and there's not much that we can do. That's what we've been hearing. And with this bill, it will help because a lot of private dwellings or homeowners, they are scared, you know. They're scared for their life, and they're scared for if they go against them, what's going to happen to their house. And that's what we've been hearing. And they're all vulnerable. A lot of them are vulnerable, so. And I've been hearing, and you've been seeing it on social media too as well, that, you know, I have heard many of our residents, even our leaders, you know, they welcome this SCAN legislation. And many have said that we want to take back our communities that is currently overrun by drugs and crimes. They want to see, and I would like to see a lot of our young children live in a safe place and play. You know, they should not be worried about vehicles, unknown vehicles, or drug dealers in the communities. Because a lot of them, they're luring young girls and young boys, and it's really bad. And I do welcome this bill, and I will support it for the safety of our children so they can enjoy their community as we have done when we were young. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. To the principle of the bill. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly, I thank the Minister of Justice for bringing this forward. Thank them for the work that they've done to date. I support this bill to go to second reading. I spoke to some former Members. This is not the first time this bill has been brought to this House in previous assemblies. I spoke to residents, constituents. I've spoke to law enforcement agencies. So I've had some great conversations around this. I really look forward to the work that committee will now do to continue this important piece of legislation, and I will be supporting to get it to committee. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the principle of the bill. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be -- listening to all my colleagues and all the things that they said, we are really going through a not easy time in the Northwest Territories here in our communities. It doesn't matter whether you're connected by road or you have to fly in, it seems like safety has become

a real issue in our territory now more than ever. And we need to look at how we can do some things that will prevent safety from becoming a real big issue in our community. So working together and then looking at this bill will bring us a little closer to having our communities be safe, so therefore I will be supporting this for the second reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I wasn't going to -- I am not going to say much, I wasn't going to say much, but hearing the voices of my colleagues I just wanted to join in sharing my support for this piece of legislation. This is part of the suite of enforcement tools that the Government of the Northwest Territories is bringing forward to support this Assembly's priority for public safety. And I think I, you know, have heard loud and clear, especially from our -- my Indigenous colleagues, small community members, that these kind of tools are absolutely needed to help create safe and secure communities in the Northwest Territories so it's an easy one to support the principle of this. There are -- we have examples of how this legislation can work, respecting people's rights, respecting the pitfalls of any kind of new enhanced enforcement tools like this, and the committee no doubt will ensure that the bill conforms to those rigors, conforms to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and is focused on what we're trying to go after which are the drug dealers who are taking advantage of addictions, who are bringing crime into our communities, who are only making poverty worse in the Northwest Territories. We need to get rid of them, and this bill will help do that. So I have no problem at all supporting it. And after two town halls, with almost 200 people in attendance, it's pretty clear that the vast majority of those who care about this issue, who came forward to those public gatherings who are in the city of Yellowknife, also want tools like this available to our government. So on behalf of their concerns, we will bring this -- I am happy to support this. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the principal of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North.

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

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

The Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining please stand. Colleagues, 16 in favour. One opposed. Zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 49 has been read a second time and is referred to the standing committee of the Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 52:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 1, 2026-2027

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Bill 52 has been read a second time and is ready for a third reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 32, Supplementary Estimates (Operations Estimates), No. 1, Bill 48, with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish? I am going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act No. 2; Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027; and, Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. We'll take a short 10-minute recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, No. 2. I will ask the Minister of Finance to introduce the bill. Minister will make her opening comments.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to appear before you to speak to Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act No. 2. Before I begin, I want to thank the Standing Committee on Government Operations for their very thorough review of this bill.

The Public Service Act is the legislative backbone of our government's operations. It outlines how we hire, manage, and support the dedicated individuals who serve residents of the Northwest Territories. However, the last time this Act was substantively revised was in 1988. Since then, our workplaces have evolved, and it is time that our legislation reflect modern public sector practices.

Bill 32 proposes comprehensive amendments intended to improve the clarity and transparency and as well introduce gender-neutral language throughout.

Bill 32 clarifies roles and responsibilities. While ultimate accountability remains with the Minister responsible for the Public Service, the bill legislatively recognizes the deputy minister of finance as the primary authority for public service management.

It also empowers deputy heads to manage their departments directly and effectively.

Amendments to the Act provide a clearer framework for engagement between the GNWT and employees' associations by setting out specific recourse for unfair labour practices, filling a critical gap in the current legislation.

To better support fairness in our processes, the bill moves the eligibility criteria for staffing appeals directly into the Act itself.

And, finally, it introduces safe disclosure for all public servants. These protections will provide residents and the government enhanced security by ensuring that employees who see wrongdoing can speak up without fear it would affect their career or result in a reprisal against them.

To guarantee impartiality and confidentiality, this process will now be administered by a public interest disclosure officer, an independent third party completely external to the Department of Finance.

Bill 32 introduces impactful and overdue changes. It will advance security and confidence in the operations of government for employees and residents alike, while clarifying the balance of power, streamlining processes, and strengthening oversight.

This concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be pleased to answer questions the Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the chambers?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, happy to do so. On my left Bill McKay, deputy minister of finance. And on my right, Laura Jeffery, legislative counsel for the Department of Justice.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that reviewed the bill for any opening comments on Bill 32. I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act No. 2, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on October 21st, 2025, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. A motion extending committee's review of Bill 32 was adopted by the Assembly on February 13th, 2026.

During its review, the committee received a briefing from the Minister of Finance, held a public meeting in Yellowknife, and solicited written comments from stakeholders and the general public. The committee received 11 written submissions from the public, and I thank those who wrote in to share their comments and extensive suggestions to amend the bill.

The committee completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Finance on May 28th, 2026. During this review and as a result of the comments the committee received, the committee removed no less than 23 motions to amend eight clauses of the bill based on feedback received from stakeholders and recommendations from the department. The Minister concurred with each of the motions.

So I thank the committee for their efforts in reviewing this legislation. It was certainly one of the more complex reviews that we've done in this term, and I thank the committee members in particular who read through the extensive motions on the clause-by-clause review. It took a fair bit of time but we got through it, so thank you to them. And, Mr. Chair, individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will now open the floor for general comments on Bill 32. Are there any questions from the Members? Okay, seeing none. Is the committee agreed that there are no further general comments? Committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Can we proceed to clause-by-clause review of the bill? Committee, agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. There are 51 clauses of the bill. Where possible, I will call clause by in groups of five. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will defer the bill's bill numbers

and title until after consideration of the clauses.  
Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

Clauses 1 to 5, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Clauses 6 to 10, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 24 of the bill.

Clauses 11 to 15, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 54 of the bill.

Clauses 6 to 20, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 55 of the bill.

Clauses 21 to 25, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 60 of the bill.

Clauses 26 to 30, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Please turn  
to page 64 of the bill.

Clauses 1 to 35, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 68 of the bill.

Clauses 36 to 40, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Please turn  
to page 86 of the bill.

Clauses 41 to 45, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 88 of the bill.

Clauses 46 to 50, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Please turn to page 91 of the bill.

Clause 51, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Returning to the bill's number and title. Bill 32,  
An Act to Amend the Public Service Act No. 2,  
does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
To the bill as a whole, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Does committee agree that Bill 32, An Act to  
Amend the Public Service Act No. 2, is now  
ready for third reading; does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Committee, does the committee agree that this  
concludes our consideration of Bill 32, An Act  
to Amend the Public Service Act No. 2; does  
committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you,  
Minister, and thank you to the witnesses.  
Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses  
from the chambers.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled  
Document 522-20(1), Supplementary  
Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1,  
2026-2027. We're going to pick up where we  
left off yesterday evening. Does the Minister of  
Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House  
this evening?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.  
Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses  
into the chamber. Would the Minister please  
introduce her witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Certainly, Mr.  
Chair. On my left, Mr. Chair, is Bill McKay, the  
deputy minister of finance. And on my right  
Mandi Bolstad, the deputy secretary to the  
financial management board.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank  
you. Does the committee agree to proceed to  
the details contained in the tabled documents,  
committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will resume consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on page 3 to 4, starting with education. I would like to go back to the Member from Monfwi where we left off yesterday.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yesterday, when we were talking about education regarding the programs and services delivery, so in -- you know, I just wanted to ask the Minister, I know when the learning centre was closed in 19 communities, it was done without consultation. And I know this government is really advocating -- believe in consultation and working with the Indigenous group, Indigenous government, to build good working relationship. And so with that in mind, I just wanted to ask the Minister if they are working with the Indigenous group in Fort Smith regarding the operation of some programs that's being delivered in Fort Smith -- or, you know, when they're cancelling a program, moving to a different location or to different colleges, are they consulting and working with the Indigenous government in Fort Smith? Because there -- it's not just one. There's the First Nation and there's the Metis group too as well, so. Because I know many of them, they do rely on these program and services delivery through the Aurora College. So I just wanted to ask that, if they're working with -- so what kind of relationship do they have with the Indigenous group in Fort Smith? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Mr. Chair, very important question. Mr. Chair, we're fortunate in just in this government that the Thebacha leadership council has been formed, which is an opportunity where all of the different leadership governments and leaders within the community are able to come together, and that certainly helps provide a point of immediate reference for our government. I believe, in fact, that a Minister of this government was quite instrumental in seeing that entity come to fruition. So certainly, speaking for myself at least, I would say that there's a lot of conversations that happen, there's a lot of engagements. I've been to Fort Smith multiple times, and I believe other Ministers of the government have as well. I understand that the college board's president has had conversations with Members of the Thebacha leadership council but I can't speak for the board -- or for the Aurora College board. So, Mr. Chair, what I certainly could do is this is -- again, this is for the supplementary

appropriation. We are looking for an opportunity to provide some funding so that the college can begin the development of curriculum. That curriculum work does include, you know, positions that are expected to be based both in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith, and then to be able to be having cohorts enter these programs in the fall of 2027. And certainly happy to convey back via the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment the desire to ensure that we do continue to maintain the relationships that the government has with the Thebacha leadership council and all Indigenous leaders and regional leaders within Fort Smith as well. So, again, happy to take that back. As I say, this is a supplementary appropriation to make sure that we take this first step, and then further development and programming begins from here. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. So the reason why I ask this is because the bachelor of teacher education and bachelor of social work program, it's going to be delivered out of Yellowknife and not in the community -- I mean, it's not going to be offered in Fort Smith. And social work program was being delivered through Fort Smith before and also with the Thebacha campus. You know, when we went to school there in the 90s, a lot of those programs were being delivered out of a portable unit. There was a social work program, the renewable resources program, school community counsellor program, interpreter/translator program, and teacher education program was at the other end of the community where they were near the school. Now they have a really beautiful facility. You know, a lot of work went into the extension of the building. And they even have a daycare. This was not available when we were there, the daycare services near the college. I mean, everything is right there. They have all the -- you know, they have the facility, they have the accommodations, they have daycare services for families with children. Now that if we have these programs being pulled out from the community of Fort Smith, it's not just going to have an impact there, it's also going to have an impact on the school operations because they do rely -- I know that Fort Smith -- because Fort Smith was a centre, that's where a lot of our community members went to take various programs and a lot of them came with their families because of the funding allocation from GNWT for school. So they receive a lot of money from that, but now they're not going to receive lots and now it's going to be Yellowknife that's going to be receiving, especially for families with children. So the funding allocation,

they're going to lose that and the small communities are going to lose that too. So I just -- even in Behchoko alone, I know we had a community-based program where two years of teacher education program was offered. That was really good. It was a success story, even for the Indigenous language program too, and -- but after two years, they had an option of transferring to either go to Saskatoon or University of Saskatchewan because it's affiliated with Aurora College and/or to Fort Smith. But there was not too many disruptions when they took the program in their community. So I am just -- I want to ask the Minister if they're -- instead of having this program only delivered in Yellowknife, is there a plan to extend these two programs? Because we need a lot of social work -- social workers in small communities, and we need a lot of teachers, you know. We didn't have -- don't have any or didn't have any recent grads from Aurora College since it closed in 2017 or the two programs was cancelled in 2017. So I just want to ask the Minister if there's any plan to have these programs extended to small communities where family are -- do want to leave due to no housing -- due to housing issues, and especially with daycares too. If there's no daycare provided here in Yellowknife, there's daycare services, but a lot of our people will not meet the needs. They cannot afford it. Some of them are saying that, so -- and there's a long waitlist. But in Fort Smith, I am not too sure about the waitlist but at least they have the facility there for families with children. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, certainly, I am obviously very eager to see, I agree, very eager to see a return of both of these programs. There's high needs for social workers and teachers across the North, and all the better if they have received their training in the North, have a grounding and a sense of place, and even better if it's, in fact, young people with connections to the North who are perhaps wanting to stay closer to home to complete that education. So agreed, lots of good news stories here. I appreciate those comments. This is why this has come forward as a supplementary appropriation. There was an opportunity to see these programs move forward quickly and move forward in time that they can start to take cohorts in in 2027, but we did have to bring this off cycle, so that's precisely why it's here as a supplementary appropriation.

At this point in time, it's not my understanding, I don't have any information that the board or the college are trying to establish even additional

programs. They are trying to get the design work done on course development. That's what this is for. And to do that, having some positions based in Fort Smith and some in Yellowknife to make good on capacity that's available in both of those existing facilities.

As for beyond that with respect to student housing or student child care, etcetera, that's -- I don't have any details in front of me with this supplementary appropriation because for the time being they're just doing the program design and the academic quality assurance processes. Then once the cohort is ready to go in 2027, I imagine it's very likely that in normal business processes we'll see perhaps a need for some additional funding in order to get this off the ground. But, again, that'll come through in business planning in due course. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** These two programs are very important for many of our community members, so. So if the program is going to be delivered in Yellowknife, you know, I mean -- well, I hope that, you know, this program is going to go back to Fort Smith. But if there was a -- you know, for whatever reason that, okay, the Aurora College board says, okay, we're going to have it delivered in Yellowknife, do you -- how are they going to accommodate our people coming from the small communities with families; is there going to be enough accommodation to meet the needs? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And an excellent question, Mr. Chair. I would strain to suggest that there is still a housing need in most communities, indeed if not all communities across Northwest Territories so much bigger question but one that has right now, I would say, attention from multiple departments. Certainly Housing NWT is our lead, but multiple departments in order to succeed in their own mandates, whether it's strategic infrastructure projects and whether it's this one, will all be looking to ensure that there are housing available, whether it's for workers coming in or students coming in. So, again, appreciate that this is yet one more area where we need to make sure that we are taking a whole of government/whole of NWT lens on providing housing so that all other programs can succeed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions from Members on this topic? Okay. I don't see any.

I am going to continue on. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$26,901,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, education, not previously authorized, \$26,901,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$1,354,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$1,354,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$33,140,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 5 for the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, environmental management monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$261,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, environmental management monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$261,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, regulatory assessment and authorizations, not previously authorized, \$414,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, regulatory assessment and

authorization, not previously authorized, \$414,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$825,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 6 for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

Department of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, gender equity, not previously authorized, \$533,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, gender equity, not previously authorized, \$533,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, governance and services, integration, not previously authorized, \$472,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there's an extra \$35,000 in there to continue operations of the temporary transitional housing facility in Yellowknife. Now, I mean, clearly that's not a full operations funding for the year or anything, but I wonder if the Minister can explain what that money is for or why that was not foreseen previously when we budgeted for this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I understand that the budget simply -- or that the contract wasn't fully finalized when the 2026-2027 budget was

concluded, and as such this is just -- this was an additional amount that came to light after that. So sometimes the departments will take in a sum that's of this size and fund it internally. But executive and Indigenous affairs, particularly with respect to the work in housing and homelessness transition, has -- well, finding themselves a little lean and so the matter has come forward as a supplementary appropriation. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister just clarify the contract that has now been finalized, is it just for one year at a time; is it a multi-year contract? Can the Minister clarify the -- yeah, the length of the contract. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Chair, thank you. The operations contract with the Yellowknife Women's Society is effective from November the 7th, 2025, through to March 31st, 2027. There is an option to extend for an additional year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing none, no further questions.

Department of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, governance and services integration, not previously authorized, \$472,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, total department not previously authorized, \$1,005,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Please turn to page 7 and 8 for the Department of Health and Social Services.

Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, administrative support services, not previously authorized, \$367,000. Are there any questions? Thank you. I am going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will probably have the same question for the next few functions under health and social services. But can the Minister provide substantiation for the item that is to provide funding for stabilizing primary care services? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly happy to describe this a little bit further, this particular item for stabilizing primary care services. Mr. Chair -- sorry, and I just want to make sure there's -- this is under the \$88,000 or under the next item? Okay, sorry? Sorry, Mr. Chair. Let me just pull up a different item then, and perhaps it may well be that the deputy minister has this in front of him. I have the wrong note open. I am mindful of time and get it out quickly.

Mr. Chair, there is an overall effort within these items to ensure that there's an adjustment to support ongoing community health nurses and nurse practitioner positions, ultimately to a total of 22 additional positions being funded, so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, no, I guess I am especially interested in the \$88,000 for administrative and support services when it's continually raised in the House that, you know, health staff, health practitioners, of all modalities, find the administrative burden to be quite high. It takes away from actually helping patients. So I am curious how this \$88,000 is being spent; is it on a PY, is it -- where is it located, etcetera. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Chair, I apologize for the confusion on that one. So the amount of dollars are split. The effort to stabilize primary care services broadly does see funding split between some of the different functions within health and social services precisely for the reason that the Member is mentioning, that there are administrative and support services that do need to take place and so some funding will be directed in that regard, and some will be directed more into the programs and services which would relate back to adding additional positions. So some of the administrative supports would include, you know, things such as even just the TSC chargebacks that are associated with a position, and that's where -- under administrative and support services falls under that.

With respect to the comments, though, around trying to ensure more broadly administrative support within health and social services, Mr. Chair, I would suggest that this one is really targeted more at ensuring that there's adequate supports in terms of the healthcare providers. I can provide, I believe, a full breakdown of where those positions are proposed to be located, if that is interest, but I will go back to the Member just to make sure I am on the right track. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. That would be most appreciated, and I will stop at this point.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On this item, I just wanted clarification on the item pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance MOU. And I understand that that is offset by a federal contribution but I wonder if the Minister can explain what the \$83,000 is for and just give some context to what is this MOU with the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This funding supports the continuation of a position for a senior project manager for pharmaceutical management, and that supports the Northwest Territories' continued involvement in national drug price negotiations and associated work, which does bring some access to lower drug cost opportunities and procurement opportunities on a national scale, as well as providing and ensuring that there's consistency in drug coverage across our jurisdiction and across the rest of -- in the alliance and in connection to the rest of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay, thank you for that. I appreciate that is important work. Is this a term position, a casual, or some kind of secondment; can you just explain the type of position that this is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would want to confirm

although I can say at this point the position was pre-existing. And I am only hesitating in that with funding sunsetting on a position that often is a term position, that is often what winds up happening when a position is fully funded by external funding but, again, at some point our own rules will kick in and put a term position in to indeterminate. I don't know what status this one is in right now, Mr. Chair. But right now this funding does extend the term out to March 31st of 2030. That suggests to me that it makes it indeterminate but, again, I don't have that here. If I am incorrect about that, I will correct the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all for this section.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have First Nations and Inuit home and community care agreement, and it says that's administrative and support services as well it's fully offset by the Government of Canada. Those are -- that's because you're looking at administrative, is that positions that -- it's \$194,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so the First Nations and Inuit home and community care program, as the Member mentioned, is fully offset, comes revenues from Indigenous Services Canada. This supports home care, nursing, respite services, chronic disease management, palliative care, day programming for elders and seniors, as well as some of the program administrative fees associated with that. This is an agreement that we have had with the federal government in funding in different amounts now since 2013. It's -- this year we're seeing it here just because the timing of the agreement did not align up to having it included within the normal budgetary cycle, and so it's coming forward as a sup. But it has been a fairly consistent source of funding for these programs for some time. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I ask the Minister if this is a program where there's a new program that's service -- service

fees I think it's called. Anyways if a person needs a long-term care bed and they're still in the hospital, this is where the government charges them \$34 a day. Is this part of that program? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, Mr. Chair, this is not connected to that program. I do have some information with respect to some different fees that now are associated but it's -- the fees associated to accessing long-term care is not associated to this, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Nothing further for that, Mr. Chair. But I am going to look for that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members on this section? Seeing none. Seeing no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, administrative support services, not previously authorized, \$367,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social services programs, not previously authorized, \$12,603,000. Are there any questions? Okay, I am going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, similar question to before. Can the Minister please provide a substantiation for the line item on providing funding to stabilize primary care services in the amount of \$2,677,000, and if her list of breakdown by community, by staff, etcetera, would be amenable to doing so for this item as well. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so, indeed, it would be -- formally under this particular program item that the positions would be increased, and this is -- this was driven and due -- you know, due to the discussions amongst Members of the House at the last budget negotiations and a desire to ensure that there is adequate funding to help provide frontline community positions.

We have here 22 different positions. A community health nurse, nurse practitioner, primary care nurse practitioner, and nurse case manager, all in Inuvik, five positions in total. Community health nurse for Lutselk'e, community health nurse in Paulatuk, primary care nurse in Tuktoyaktuk, community health nurse in Ulukhaktok, primary care nurse practitioner for Whati. And remaining positions are in the form of community health nurse and a primary care health nurse practitioner in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I was madly writing down the details and the answers because I am also interested in that \$2.677 million expenditure as well.

Does the Minister have any indication about when those job ads or openings might -- you know, if this gets approved this week, how soon we might be able to see job ads go out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Chair, this is, again, further to a budget commitment so what I can do is table those position lists just so I am not rereading lots of numbers and names. But what I'd suggest with respect to recruitment, I will turn that over to the deputy minister, please.

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

**MR. BILL McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So once the funding is approved, then the department will have a budget and those positions established so they'll be able to start a job action the next day if they want. So typically our service standard is around 11 weeks to fill a position with the Department of Finance. So I expect that we would meet that in this case as well, depending on the urgency for some of those positions though it could be shorter than that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to confirm, the job descriptions for these new

positions have already been completed so, you know, just approving the budget is the last step before being able to actually go ahead with advertising those positions, just to confirm that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, these are standard positions so they would have job descriptions available to them. And we were just saying, Mr. Chair, there may well be a chance that, in fact, there could be -- I know some of these positions, for example community health nurses, have had standing open positions on recruitment. And if that's the case, then the additional positions would be added to those existing recruitment efforts. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure if the Minister of Finance will be able to answer this question but further to my statement today, when it comes to recruitment will the same approaches and methods be used in this case, or do we have any new and creative approaches to recruitment up our sleeve? I know this is going to be a pretty significant increase in positions and we've already been struggling to fill all of our positions. Is there any plan in place to try anything new or different in terms of recruiting and trying to fill these positions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, Mr. Chair, I don't -- while I happen to wear the other hat for the public service in general, I don't have necessarily in front of me all details with respect to their health -- their health recruitment unit. We do provide that information on a regular basis to my colleagues and certainly would be happy to propose perhaps putting the latest numbers on -- as a tabled document just to make sure that that information is getting out publicly. Recruitment has gone -- it goes well in the sense that they are recruiting a high number of frontline health care positions. But we are continuing to fund additional positions, and so it has been challenging perhaps to keep up with the continued identified need, even if recruitment numbers are going up.

I will turn to the deputy minister here briefly, Mr. Chair, just to provide a bit of extra information about some of the efforts, which isn't to say that efforts can't continue to be more creative, just

that with respect to the supplementary appropriation before us, creating the positions, I don't necessarily have that information. But perhaps a few words from the deputy, please.

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

**MR. BILL McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is an area that we're working closely with health. As the Minister mentioned, we do have a health recruitment unit that has been fairly successful in recruiting healthcare professionals to the government. As with every other professional or health care professional, they're in much demand so retention is also a problem. So we do recruit a lot but there is a lot of turnover in the workforce. But we have undertaken specific programs directly related to health care recruitment such as the Bring a Friend program. There was a labour market supplement that is specifically geared towards healthcare professionals. And we're, of course, exploring other ways we can recruit healthcare professionals to the North, specifically within the HR department. We do have a marketing department that is constantly looking at ways to promote the GNWT as an employer of choice, including in the healthcare field, especially in the healthcare field where the need is generally the greatest.

So I take the Member's point that we do need to be creative, and we are looking at ways of being more creative in terms of our recruitment but especially in the healthcare field. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So -- and, you know, one key aspect of recruitment and retention, of course, is competitive compensation. So the deputy minister just mentioned a labour market supplement. Can the Minister or deputy minister clarify whether a labour market supplement will apply to these particular positions that we are adding here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I believe that is correct, Mr. Chair. I mean, I don't have the full list of all LMS-relevant positions in front of us but I think the answer is yes. And if we are incorrect, we'll bring that forward at the first opportunity.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So that is good news. And I will leave it there for now, just acknowledging that I hope these conversations continue and we'll get more information out there to the public, and I do think that it will help to have as many hands on deck as possible in terms of recruitment and retention but -- so, you know, getting the word out, especially about things like the labour market supplement, will be key, and hopefully people can tap into their networks and spread the word about what a great place to live in the North and our communities are. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question to the Minister, is this -- well, because you're looking at long-term care and continuing -- long-term and continuing care services so it's also fully offset by the Government of Canada. Is this the place where you're looking at the service programs, like the service fee programs? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This could be a place where I could answer some questions on service fee programs. Mr. Chair, I don't want to presume the question, but I suspect this might be with respect to a \$34 fee that sometimes gets charged. So, Mr. Chair, if I might just take the liberty of answering that question.

As of July 1st of this year, it's expected that patients designated as requiring an alternate level of care are -- and who have been approved for long-term care are going to be asked to pay long-term care accommodation rates. So as compared to a lot of southern jurisdictions, the Northwest Territories has a very low accommodation rate, namely the \$34 bed fee, and they are asked at -- when they are no longer requiring hospital care or hospital treatment but they simply are waiting to be transferred from an existing hospital bed out into long-term accommodation, then that is when that fee kicks in. So that would be the same as if they were receiving care in a long-term care placement. So instead of paying a long-term care placement fee, they're paying that fee at the hospital. But, again, I would emphasize, patients that are still receiving acute care in hospital don't pay that fee. It's when they are stabilized and only now receiving accommodation, room and board, etcetera, but waiting for a long-term placement.

So that is a new fee that is coming in. Previously, patients who were waiting for a bed, when they were no longer receiving their care but waiting for a bed they would not be paying that fee. Again, it is substantially much lower than what often is incurred in southern jurisdictions or other jurisdictions, but there is a change in that it is coming in now to folks who are still in hospital but waiting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue I have with that is that it is not the fault of the individual that is sitting in the hospital that there is no placement for them in long-term care. So I did speak to some people about it and people did mention to me that, you know, it's not the fault of the person that's in the hospital so why should they have to be penalized for waiting for a bed if it's determined that they need long-term care? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So in my understanding, and again this is where the supplementary appropriation in this regard isn't specific or connected, really, to this change in policy so we'll certainly respond and report back if I am incorrect. But I believe that the fee is -- it's when someone's in hospital but no longer receiving health care, this would be, you know, the same as someone who's not covered by a health care plan because they're not receiving health care. So it's the same fee that would be charged for anyone that is in that position. It is also the same fee that the person would be charged when they enter into long-term care. So it's really acknowledging that they are moving from being an inpatient receiving health services under health -- under the healthcare insurance policies that as a government in Canada we're obliged to provide for Canadian citizens. They've shifted to being a long-term care resident. That -- that \$34 a day is the same fee that they'd be charged in those circumstances. That's the change, is that rather than getting the bed in the hospital, which would be for health care, it's recognizing that they're actually now receiving long-term care, which is a fee-based, albeit at a very low rate of \$34 a day for both room, board, and accommodation. So it is a change going from zero to \$34, Mr. Chair, but it is reflective of the fact that they're not receiving acute care. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. There's a lot of ways you could look at this. First of all, a lot of our people that are in the hospital don't have a lot of money and so -- and then they're waiting -- presumably they're waiting for a long-term care bed or -- like I said, it's not their fault that there's no bed available for them so they're still in the hospital. And then I heard the Minister reference things like this happened in the -- this is how they do things in the south. Well, we're not in the south. We're in the North. Cost of living is really high in our communities. And a lot of -- you look at that payment for an individual, especially if it's for an elder or somebody that has an injury, that there's no foreseeable future, it looks like they're not going to recover, so they're going to be in this place possibly the rest of their life. And so to pay \$34 a day for the rest of their life is like -- we're in the North here. We do things differently. It seems like some of the things that we're adopting is -- is from the south. It makes sense -- maybe it makes sense there but in the North here we do things differently. So for a long time we've been taking care of -- we've been helping and taking care of the people, and that's the way it was for us. That's how we do things in the North. That's how we do things in our communities.

I understand there is a need for us to kind of supplement or help pay for some things. Yes, we need to do that. It's just that this \$34 a day adds up every day for a family or a person that doesn't make a lot of money. So I guess I will be bringing this up in the House. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Is there any further questions?

Okay, well, what we'll do is we'll stop there. We'll come back to the Member from Monfwi. We'll take a 20-minute break to give the translators some time, and then we'll come back. Thank you.

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**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** We'll continue on. Where we left off is at the Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social services program, not previously authorized, \$12,603,000. Where we left off was the Member from Monfwi had her hand up before we took a break, so I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** The First Nations Inuit home and community care agreement, this is also for -- well, I am not too sure, but -- that's why I am asking is that so people with third party insurance, they do not

qualify for this program. Can you explain this program a little bit more to us. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry, Mr. Chair, this is -- it's not something that goes direct to residents. It helps support the Department of Health and Social Services to provide care for Indigenous residents. I don't know that there's a testing of whether or not an Indigenous resident has access to other forms of insurance that maybe that Member's considering under non-insured health benefits, so providing first point of care access or first point of connection access, but this is to ensure that these services are available in communities. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. So how is this -- I know it's offset by the Government of Canada. So how is this program allocated? So does it support the communities, all the -- all 33 communities to provide community care for First Nations and Inuit? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is a mix of both positions that are supported through this in a number of communities around Northwest Territories, as well as there being some funding available for non-government organizations and programs within Indigenous community-based care initiatives. So there's overall, Mr. Chair, 48.2 position equivalents that are funded, and then the remainder amounts go to these other areas, so -- and I -- Mr. Chair, I could certainly -- I know I've provided Members by correspondence earlier today with these numbers, but I'd be happy to -- if it's helpful, could certainly provide that to the House. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** No, that's good because she said 48 new positions being, you know, funded through this program, and a lot of these care is greatly needed in many of the small communities, so. And I guess with the next one is, if they can tell us how this program is being allocated. Well, there's 48.2 position but it does -- it goes to all the communities, does it fund all the communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was trying to quickly get a sense of exactly -- there's -- not all 33 communities are expressly listed with funding coming from this particular program which isn't to say that they don't have other sources of funding to provide similar equivalent levels of supports. But for example, Mr. Chair, there is a licensed practical nurse, medical social worker, home support worker, and dietician all based with the TCSA in Behchoko, and other -- other communities as well. Gameti has a home support worker, and Wekweeti, as well licensed practical nurse and as well licensed practical nurse and home support worker in Whati. So, again, 48.8 positions in total across the Northwest Territories come from this specifically. While the majority of them are outside of Yellowknife, and again happy to provide the full list to the House, Mr. Chair. And then there is -- as I'd mentioned, there's about \$2 million additional in the current agreement that is before the House in this supplementary appropriation that is meant to help increase access for community-based initiatives, so for non-profits or community governments to be able to access -- to deliver their own in-community programs. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. And a health system investment agreement, if the Minister can elaborate a little bit more on that because it's \$185,000.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This, Mr. Chair, is support for wastewater surveillance, respiratory point-of-care testing, and syphilis outreach activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** That's it for this, for this section. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions on this section? Okay, seeing none, no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, health and social services programs, not previously authorized, \$12,603,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, long-term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$2,462,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Recognizing the time, I will just be really brief. Can the Minister provide a substantiation and/or a breakdown of the item and the amount of \$2,292,000 on long-term care services in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this again -- or this, Mr. Chair, is for a one-year extension to the Avens long-term care contract. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I don't expect the Minister to have this with her at the moment, but could there be a breakdown of beds in Liwego'ati as it compares to Avens and sort of where the money all goes to when it comes to long-term care services in Yellowknife provided to Members. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So to be clear, Avens operates 53 beds in Yellowknife, both for dementia care, respite services. I don't have the Liwego'ati numbers here but if the request is just to provide those, and -- yeah, that's not a problem. We can do that. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you. And sort of what I am looking at here is like a cost per bed sort of across the spectrum of long-term care in Yellowknife. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We could provide that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. No further questions from the Member from Great Slave. Are there any further questions on this section? Seeing none, no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, long-term care and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$2,462,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$15,432,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Please turn to page 9 for the Department of Infrastructure.

Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, strategic infrastructure, energy and supply chain, not previously authorized, \$7,489,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand this is federal funding that we finally are seeing the low carbon economy leadership fund renewed, which is great news. Can the Minister clarify whether this money is going to be distributed through grants in terms of, like groups have to make applications and apply for the funds under this low carbon economy leadership fund, or how is the money going to be distributed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are two program streams here. The first is the great greenhouse -- oh my goodness. The greenhouse gas grant program, which is a grant program. The second is incremental funding enhancements to Arctic Energy Alliance. Mr. Chair, the Arctic Energy Alliance, of course designs its programs and it sets its budgets independent from the GNWT, so I can't necessarily just speak to what that program would -- program funding would look like. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you for that. And so is this a fund that, like individuals can apply to or community governments or organizations? Like, what kinds of eligibility criteria -- not to get too far into the weeds, but just to give people a sense of the kinds of projects that are going to be eligible to apply for the greenhouse gas grant program in particular. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it would be my -- yeah, I don't have all of the details with that on the supplementary appropriation here. I can say there is information about accessing the greenhouse gas grant program available on the GNWT's website through the strategic infrastructure and energy division, so -- but I don't have -- as I say, Mr. Chair, I am sorry, I don't have that here for the supplementary appropriation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not to worry. I can follow up and find more information as well to distribute to constituents, and hopefully we can raise awareness too amongst various community governments and organizations throughout the territory because I'd really love to see some exciting projects underway throughout the territory to help combat climate change. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, Mr. Chair, happy to have a positive uptake. This was a big hole for a couple of years. I can -- do want to note that the department was out at trade shows in Fort Smith back in April. They'll be out at the trade show in Inuvik and certainly happy to have more support getting the word out about the return of these programs. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Oh, no further questions, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions on this section? Okay. Seeing no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, Strategic Infrastructure, Energy and Supply Chains, not previously authorized, \$7,489,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, regional operation, not previously authorized, \$415,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, regional operation, not previously authorized, \$415,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$7,904,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Please turn to page 10 for the Department of Justice. Department of Justice, operations expenditures, community justice, not previously authorized, \$675,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wonder if the Minister can explain how we are enhancing victim services. I understand this is federal funding for the enhancing victim services agreement but how is it that we're actually enhancing? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this funding helps support 12 existing community-based victim services coordinator positions with contribution agreements directly with Indigenous governments or community governments. This is meant to help support victims of crime with those efforts, obviously. Now I am not sure the extent to which or the degree to which there's been any changes in these programs, Mr. Chair, but there's -- we are trying to ensure that there is compliance and enhancement under the Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights and to ensure that there is adequate funding to deliver the core community services with these frontline positions with this federal funding. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members on this section?

Department of Justice, operations expenditures, community justice, not previously authorized, \$675,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Department of Justice, operations expenditures, court services, not

previously authorized, \$288,000. Are there any questions?

Department of Justice, operations expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$288,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (\*1\*):** Thank you. Department of Justice, operations expenditures, policing services, not previously authorized, \$1,050,000. Are there any questions? I am going to go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we have here just over a million dollars, and it says it's to purchase a PC-24 twin engine aircraft to support policing operations. Can the Minister confirm that we are asked to purchase this aircraft for the RCMP but the RCMP would own and operate that aircraft? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I am going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So yes, Mr. Chair, this is part of our obligation under the territorial policing services agreement. We pay 70 percent of approved costs under that agreement for police services and police operations, and in this case a request was made on behalf of G-Division to replace an aircraft that was lost back in 2023 based on the information that they have had over the last couple of years or in the couple of years thereafter identifying the need to return to having access -- regular access to an aircraft. And this specific aircraft was identified as being one that they suggest could meet the necessary safety and operational requirements that they have.

There is also within it, with respect to operations, Mr. Chair, this also includes an aircraft maintenance engineer position so that the aircraft can remain up to date in compliance with regulatory requirements, operational readiness, so on and so forth.

And I think there might have been another question, Mr. Chair. I am sorry if I missed it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I admit this is the first time that I am hearing that we're not only responsible for paying for, like staffing and operational costs for the RCMP but in fact responsible for some capital expenditures as well. Do we have any particular agreement or contract with the RCMP around

us paying for capital items that they will then own? I mean, I am particularly noting -- I mean, if it's a matter of building a building or something, we know it's going to stay here in the North but when it comes to an aircraft and then it belongs to the RCMP, theoretically they could use that anywhere that the RCMP operates. So do we have some sort of contract around terms of, you know, providing capital costs and what guarantees we would have going forward that those expenditures would be used exclusively in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, there'd be much more detail in the contract itself, whether within the territorial police services agreement itself or within the detailed agreements around this aircraft. I suspect within the territorial police services agreement. I don't have the agreement in front of me, Mr. Chair. I think that is a fair question. So, again, I believe there is an expectation that the assets purchased by the GNWT remain for use by G-Division specifically. I will -- again, if I've -- if I am incorrect in my recollection of what the details are, I will certainly return back to the House but I believe it is that it would have to remain within the services of G-Division. I don't know that there's anything more specific but if there is, again, I will -- I can provide that clarification or additional detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the Minister aware of whether we will be obligated going forward to pay for, you know, upkeep, maintenance, replacement of capital items such as this? Is that assumed or also included in the agreement? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an expectation under the agreement that we would pay for these costs. It's certainly -- so, for instance, if there's a new detachment, while we wouldn't necessarily as the GNWT make the determination of what is operationally required by the RCMP, they would make that determination, but once that is determined they do come to the GNWT and there's an expectation for funding. The difference between a 70/30 would be when there's the First Nations policing agreement. I don't think I have quite that right. But then that's where the division is split more differently

between ourselves and the federal government, and they pay a greater portion of it. But when it comes to some of these assets, there is that expectation. So vehicles, for instance. There's some differences when you get into RCMP accommodations. I don't have those details in front of me on the sup. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are there precedents of -- or is the Minister aware of whether in the past we have been buying aircraft for the RCMP and how often this kind of a request might come to us? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not often with respect to an aircraft, Mr. Chair. In this case, the aircraft in 2023 was in an accident and became unserviceable and so that's -- we've been, I believe, borrowing an aircraft for some time or sharing, perhaps, with Yukon if I recall correctly. So it was a question of needing a new one for G-Division. But the expectation is that this will be able to amortize over a fairly extended 15-year period of time, and so hopefully that would be a -- at minimum of the useful life of the asset. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the previous aircraft was damaged in an accident, is there some sort of insurance that can kick in and help cover the cost of this replacement? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I don't have the full details on the sup. I do know that there was inquiries made with respect to what -- whether there was insurance opportunities, warranty, so on and so forth. I don't know the conclusions of those -- of that or how -- what the outcome was. I can certainly look into it and provide the Member that information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** No further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No questions on this item, no.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Okay, moving on.

Department of Justice, operations expenditures, policing services, not previously authorized, \$1,050,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, \$739,000. Are there any questions? I am going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I am just curious if the Minister could provide some detail for us. I know the Office of the Privacy Commissioner definitely always highlights their need for resources when they come and present to SCOGO, and so I am curious to hear the Minister detail how this funding will be used and how they feel it'll help with the backlog of ATIPP requests. Thanks.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there was an external evaluation done in 2025-2026 that identified fairly specific capacity gaps and workload assessment was taken from that. And based upon that, this ask is being brought forward. And given that these are known pressures, that's where it's coming forward as a supplementary appropriation. It is a legislative environment so there is an expectation that the timelines are met. And, again, based on the evaluation and therefore the workload analysis, this is being brought forward immediately rather than waiting. And with it comes, I believe, five additional positions to support workload pressures and service delivery. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just looking for a general explanation. And that's it for this section. Thank you.

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

**MS. REID:** No, thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister just answered my question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on.

Department of Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, \$739,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Justice, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$2,752,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, there is a schedule on page 11 and 12 that details a supplementary reserve impact. This schedule is not a votable item and is included as information only. Are there any questions on this schedule? Seeing none -- Oh sorry, I am going to go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Couldn't let us just get by without one more question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the schedule under ECE, there is workforce tariff response. So there's \$928,000 there, and it looks like it's fully offset. So that's a federal funding. And so I am curious to know from the Minister how is that \$928,000 going to be distributed to the workforce that has been affected by tariffs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, there are existing programs within ECE that will be benefiting from this programming. So, more specifically, there is an opportunity to enhance the existing labour market development initiatives. And, Mr. Chair, I am just trying to see if I can break that down a little further for the Member. Sorry, Mr. Chair. Yeah, there are some -- yeah, Mr. Chair, I mean, there's two different programs but as for the specifics that are how the Department of ECE is delivering workforce development measures, again I can certainly provide that to the House. I do think it was provided to Members earlier today but would be happy -- oh, look at that, Mr. Chair. Look what I have just found.

So there's skills development programs. So that provides supports for individuals to

upgrade their skills or knowledge. And the skills development under tariff supports is providing more funding to individual clients but also with fewer restrictions under the categories that they could go and apply to use that funding for. There's also a stream for self-employment. So folks that are looking for the opportunities to have some funding to kick-start a small business. And, again, similarly with the tariff supports, there is again a bit of a bigger envelope available and also some fewer restrictions on these categories so that folks have, I gather, greater breadth with which they might be able to use that money.

For employee -- or for employers, rather, there is employee training offsets that they can use to support finding new or better or different skills for their employees and to fill some gaps that they may be identifying with -- as due to impacts from tariffs.

And last but not least, Mr. Chair, again that too with the tariff enhancements comes with increased funding and more funding potentially available so that third party organizations can also help do some group training, skills development programs, and the like. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so in terms of who is eligible to receive some of these programs and supports, I understand that the diamond mining workforce is eligible for this tariff-related funding. Are there any other workers in the territory who are eligible to receive these supports if they believe their, you know, profession or their industry has been affected by tariffs in some way? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And yes, definitely, the diamond mining sector is one that would qualify. Expressly included for -- or within the federal programming as well would be softwood lumber-related workers. I am not sure, to be quite frank, how many would -- necessarily that would apply to the Northwest Territories. But the programs that exist under ECE are also benefiting from the flexibility of these programs and they have wider programs that they're able to -- by using these funds for some, they are able to use their funds under these existing programs for others. So I don't have the specific program details of eligibility in the supplementary appropriation information, Mr. Chair, but I am confident that the Minister of

ECE would like to see the money expended for those who need it and can provide that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have further questions now but certainly will take any and all information about this to distribute to constituents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, do you agree that you have concluded the consideration of Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I am going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 166-20(1):  
CONCURRENCE MOTION – Tabled  
DOCUMENT 521-20(1): SUPPLEMENTARY  
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2026-2027,  
CARRIED

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that consideration of Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 522-20(1) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried. Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027, will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of appropriation bill.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister. And thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us today. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2. I will ask the Minister responsible for

the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission to introduce the bill. Minister will be making opening comments.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today I present Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2. This bill proposes amendments to expand certain presumptions for coverage of firefighters and first responders. Presumptive coverage means a diagnosis is presumed to be work-related removing the need to start a claims process to establish connection between the workers' job and their illness. The intent is to make things easier for workers and their families by reducing administrative requirements and providing more timely access to benefits. This legislation reflects the shared commitment across this Legislative Assembly to ensure that those who put themselves at risk to protect our communities are supported if they themselves are injured or become ill.

I want to acknowledge the Members of the committee who have done hard work on Bill 29, as well as the firefighters, first responders, stakeholders who have long advocated for the improvements in this area. While the bill earlier was unable to proceed on procedural grounds, the intent behind has informed the work that followed and the efforts put into this development have not been lost.

I also wish to recognize the work of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission in providing ongoing expertise to ensure that any proposed expansion of presumptive coverage can be effectively implemented in a way that is fair, financially sustainable, and administratively sound.

Bill 48 is the result of the work of many. As it stands now, it is proposed to expand cancer coverage for firefighters from 14 to 27 types of cancers making it the most comprehensive presumptive cancer coverage in Canada.

The amendments also propose expanding coverage for heart disease and injuries and include new presumptive PSD coverage for firefighters and other first responders.

I want to again express my deep respect and appreciation for the work of our first responders, the firefighters, and to recognize that presumptive coverage is not only part of a broader system of prevention, training, workplace safety, and health care needed to support them in the critical work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the Minister want to bring witnesses into the chambers?

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** I do, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Witnesses with me today are from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission: Susan Abernathy, vice-president, legal and compliance. And Curtis Stewart, general counsel. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will now open the floor for general comments on Bill 48. Are there any questions from Members? I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the Minister responsible for the WSCC for bringing forward this legislation and honouring his commitment to do so. I also want to acknowledge that there are several improvements that went beyond the scope of what Bill 29 offered, including the addition of fire scene inspectors, a mandatory 5-year review of presumptive coverage, and essentially maintaining fidelity with the majority of what was -- of the amended Bill 29 after the good work of standing committee. And, in particular, ensuring that heart disease and heart injury are covered by this legislation, because I think that is a crucial piece, and it brings us in line with the most comprehensive coverage in Canada.

There's one small piece that we'll get to later that slightly misses the mark from what was offered from Bill 29, but at this point the vast majority of those contents are, again, to share fidelity with what was offered before. However, I have heard commentary from several impacted stakeholder groups that are concerned that they are not addressed by this legislation. The first being coroners, the second being wildland firefighters, and the third being social workers. In particular, as often their work brings them either into areas that would expose them to carcinogens or to PTSD and other types of trauma. So I know that, again, that was not the scope of Bill 29 but this isn't Bill 29, this is Bill 48, and the standing committee as well made recommendations in particular around wildland firefighters. Other jurisdictions have moved towards including wildland firefighters as well, so we might be in a situation where we are falling behind. I know the Minister and every member of this House cares about our wildland

firefighters and the work they do protecting our communities. So, my question for the Minister is what about those groups that are raising their hand and saying we think we should be covered by presumptive coverage but are currently not. Will that be part of the coming 5-year review, or is that something that those groups will kind of have to engage in advocacy through their MLAs to pursue? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think right now what we're doing is we're following the trend across Canada on what's being covered and the different workforces and stuff like that. So, currently, we've committed to looking at some of the, adding the other folks, and we'll continue to do that. Right now, we don't have an agenda, if you will, to add anybody else, but there is a commitment to start looking at the other groups. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Will that work be done with the kind of mandatory 5-year reviews going forward, or will there be a separate process to look at those groups? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We can commit to putting that in as part of the 5-year.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Again, there will be more to say as we get in to the clause-by-clause but this is a good effort from the Minister to, again, keep his commitment. And I do want to acknowledge, as well, the opportunity to second this legislation was very appreciated by this Member. So thank you very much, and I look forward to going through. And I also want to acknowledge the hard work of first responders, and particularly the firefighters in my riding, who were passionate about this and have doggedly pursued this issue for a very long time. And I know some of them are with us today so I want to use this opportunity to recognize them as well. Christian Pitchoff, thank you for being here to follow this process through. And I see my father, Terry Testart up there as well. Thank you for that indulgence. My father was a firefighter in small communities for many, many years, so this is near and dear to my heart.

I know it's near and dear to the Minister's heart, and I look forward to going through the clauses. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I believe I had the Member from YK Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'll just say, now that the mic's on, Mr. Chairman, only just so briefly. I'm glad to see we finally got to this point. It was a complicated process, but the Minister will point out we're not the most advanced in the sense of coverage but hopefully one day we'll expand the coverage to those similar to other jurisdictions, like I think B.C. as well. That said, the significant work hasn't been pointed out, which we've glossed over. It's not meant to be a tongue-lashing or scolding of the Minister, but I would have been hopeful that he would have acknowledged the Member for Range Lake and the time he invested into this. Again, the firefighters have not only invested their heart and soul but I mean, we have them here represented today and this was not an easy process for any of them to break through the static of we want to help but we can't help. And finally, now we're getting to that next phase and we'll see it in action. Again, I can't stress enough, my colleague of Range Lake, you know, he's constantly been the wind behind everyone's sails of this initiative, and I think that we couldn't say enough for how much he's dogged all Members about how important this is to the firefighters. It's not a difficult leap in the sense of believing how important it is, but he made sure it never slipped off the table on how important it was and how much it meant to them, this challenge. And we know we've -- through this process, we also know, lastly I'll say, we also know we lost someone not that long ago who wasn't covered and that has struck at the industry as a whole, feeling that, you know, no one wants to feel without hope or feel abandoned and hopefully this closes the gap on that, and it's the reassurance of reminding people that we honour and care for their service, that they really do put themselves at risk, and it doesn't go unnoticed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to reaffirm I'm supporting this right to the end. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further general comments from Members on this topic? Okay, seeing none, is the committee agreed that there are no further general comments? Can we proceed to clause-by-clause review of the bill? Committee?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will defer the bill's numbers and title until consideration of the clauses.

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

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Clause 2, does the committee agree? Oh sorry, I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 168-20(1):  
BILL 48: AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT –  
DELETION AND SUBSTITUTION IN  
SUBCLAUSE 2(1), PARAGRAPH 14.1(2)(B),  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that subclause 2(1) of Bill 48 be amended by deleting proposed paragraph 14.1(2)(b) and substituting the following: (b) is or has been employed as a firefighter for a minimum period of two years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, the motion is in order and copies are being distributed to the motion. The committee may debate the amendment motion and then call question. Okay, thank you, I will go back to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, there's one area of this bill that is not equivalent to what was offered in Bill 29 and that is around latency periods. So a large effort of Bill 29 was to ensure accessible and equitable latency periods for cancer coverage for firefighters.

Currently, the way this bill is structured is those latency periods, the period between your employment as a firefighter and when you qualify for the presumptive coverage for a particular type of cancer, is to be set by regulation and that each cancer will carry between a 5- to 10-year latency period. So, that means you'll have to wait a particular period of time for a particular cancer.

And the latency periods that are set, there's a lot of math that goes into it, I guess, and decision-making that isn't always solely scientific. So, there is a concern that some of those latency periods just aren't -- are complicated and don't make a lot of sense, especially when you're in a position of someone requiring the care, and we want to get them the care. We want to get them the coverage; that's the whole point of this. So this amendment will bring the latency periods back to two years across the board for cancers. Cancers will still be allowed to be set by regulation, which will capture the evolving nature of cancer coverage for firefighters engaged in this work, which always is evolving. But it will set the latency period for those diseases at two years. And that

means two years' employment as a firefighter will qualify you for the presumptive coverage. And, again, this was part of Bill 29. It was reviewed by the Standing Committee on Government Operations extensively. And the bill as amended, that emerged, it was endorsed by committee and brought before the House, did include this clause as well. And I believe it's appropriate to ensure that we are keeping Bill 48 true to the commitment of equivalent or better coverage for firefighters and all first responders who are contained by this bill.

And this is the one area... or, sorry, there are two areas, but this is the perhaps most important area where we have to make sure that this bill reflects that work. And, again, a lot of time and effort that went in through the committee's review that showed that this was an effective and efficient use of legislative and financial resources to support firefighters in receiving this kind of important coverage. So I encourage Members of the House to support this amendment so, again, we can ensure that Bill 48 honours all of the promises of Bill 29. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order and copy has been distributed already. Is there any further questions to the motion? I'll go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

And first and foremost, thank you to the staff and the hard-working staff at the WSCC for the work on this bill. Obviously, thank you to the Minister and the department for the work put into this bill. And to the Gov Ops committee, which I am a Member of, for all the work that went into reviewing this bill. And, most importantly, my colleague from Range Lake whose advocacy and passion for this issue has been on display throughout. I certainly appreciate that as well, to bring that to this House. So, as my colleague had said, this bill was reviewed. The final iteration, I guess, of Bill 29 included the 2-year latency period. We had agreed that that would be part of the bill going forward. And, again, the bill was reviewed, was done, for the most part I think, fairly collaboratively all the way through. And then, again, it was discussed, obviously, at AOC, from that committee as well, around that. I appreciate some of the things that have been added to the bill by the department, but I do agree that I think -- I continue to support the 2-year latency. We supported it when it was at committee. We brought it forward that way. And I've been given no reason why, at this point, we should not still support that. So I do support the

amendment to the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you.

To the motion. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try to keep my comments as brief as possible. As Mr. Rodgers, or sorry, the MLA from Inuvik Boot Lake -- I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. As the MLA from Inuvik Boot Lake pointed out, this was reviewed extensively at committee. And I want to thank committee Members -- because I chair the committee -- for all their hard work on this bill. We certainly spent a fair bit of time with it, getting it to a place where we felt everyone could support it with amendments. And as the Member noted, it did get to this place with the bill with the 2-year latency periods. I just want to say, furthermore, you know, I made a point of speaking to constituents about this. And speaking to them about their feelings on, you know, there are certainly pros and cons to taking things out of regs and putting them in the bill itself. And I spoke to them about that. And the feeling was that the tradeoff for the 2-year latency period was worth it.

And so I did want to make sure that everybody understood that. And, yeah, so I had a conversation with constituents about it. And just note that, you know, I have to say, Mr. Chair, that I think this is a pretty deeply personal issue for the riding of Frame Lake.

You know, for one very obvious reason. And also just that there's a number of firefighters that live in this riding and so I feel particularly obligated to support them as their representative. And, you know, so this is one that I certainly do support. And I guess I'll leave it at that for tonight, noting that we are on o'clock. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course I want to join everyone in saying that, you know, we support enhancing coverage for firefighters. That's why we brought forward the best coverage in Canada with this bill. I do have some concerns about the 2-year latency period. Generally we like to make decisions based on evidence. I haven't seen any evidence brought forward. I know that across Canada these time periods are a combination of evidence and political negotiation. And I know that there was a lot of lobbying. People are doing their job, that's their job to do that, and it's our job to make sure that we are governing in a way that is respectful of, you know, the public purse that

we've been entrusted with. And so in the absence of seeing any sort of substantiation from the Member on this 2-year period, it's really hard to say that's good governance. It may very well be correct, it may very well be appropriate, but to arbitrarily pick a number it's a difficult one to support. That being said, I would never want to stand in the way of this. And just because of that, Cabinet will be abstaining. Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And also, you know, I appreciate the work that's been done on this. And, you know, something that I committed to when I first started as a Minister, you know, and stuff that I wanted to see done. I know WSCC was working on this, you know, from the beginning. And, you know, they've had a piece of legislation in place already. So this is something that's also near and dear to my heart as I've spent 30 years in the fire service also. So I know the impacts. I know the people that have been impacted. And I, too, have been at those services where firefighters have passed on. You know, so I have to say, though, you know, it's difficult when you're in a situation like this where, you know, we are taking a, you know, something that is not necessarily fully science driven but politically driven, when across Canada we have latency periods that vary based on science and studies. And to me, you know, as somebody who's been in the service, you know, I believe in that we do have to support the firefighters and that's why we presented this bill. That's why, you know, committee's done the hard work. That's why the Private Member's bill was put forward. There's a want from everybody to support the firefighters and the service. Again, you know, committed to actually doing things that are, you know, scientifically-based and driven by jurisdictions across Canada on what's kind of the going rate.

So that being said, keeping in mind what's proposed already is the highest in Canada. And I think that shows the commitment. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Just for the record, that was the Member from Hay River South. And to the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Thank you.

The motion carried. Clause 2 is amended.

---Carried

Are there any other amendments to Clause number 2? Seeing none, clause 2 is amended, does the committee agree.

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Please turn to page 2 of the bill.

Clause 3, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Clause 4, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Clause 5, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Clause 6, does the committee agree? Member from Range Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 169-20(1):  
BILL 48: AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT –  
DELETION AND SUBSTITUTION IN CLAUSE  
6

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that Bill 48 be amended by deleting clause 6 and substituting the following: 6. This Act comes into force January 1st, 2027.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** There is an amendment. To The motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Clause 6 is amended.

---Carried

Are there any other amendments to Clause number 6? Seeing none, continue on.

Returning to the bill's numbers and titles. Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** To the bill as a whole, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Does committee agree that Bill 48, An Act to Amend

the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2, as amended, is now ready for third reading; committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2; does committee agree?

**SOME HON. Members:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers.

I am going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move the Chair rise and report progress.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, colleagues.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 32, Tabled Document 522-20(1) and Bill 48, and would like to report progress with three motions carried, and that Bill 32 is ready for third reading, and that Bill 48 is ready for third reading as amended, and that consideration of Tabled Document 522-20(1) is concluded and that the House concur in those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Can I have a seconder? Ah man, who do I choose? So many hands up here. I will go with the guy from Inuvik Boot Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion is carried.

Report of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 41:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE REAL ESTATE  
AGENTS' LICENSING ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Honourable Member from Nunakput, Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act, be read for the third time. And Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour -- oh sorry, the Member from Hay River South has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

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

The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North.

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

Colleagues, those in favour 14, Opposed, zero. Abstentions, zero. The motion has passed. The motion is carried. Bill 41 has had its third reading.

---Carried

Members, noting it is the time of adjournment, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### Orders of the Day

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

- 1249-20(1), Regulation of Prediction Markets
- 1260-20(1),
- 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6. Acknowledgements
- 16-20(1),
- 7. Oral Questions
- 8. Written Questions
- 9. Returns to Written Questions
- 10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
- 11. Petitions
- 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 14. Tabling of Documents
- 15. Notices of Motion
- 16. Motions
- 79-20(1), Consulting Paramedics on the Regulation of Paramedicine
- 80-20(1), Closing the Land Supply Gap in the City of Yellowknife
- 17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 18. First Reading of Bills
- 19. Second Reading of Bills
- Bill 50, Marine Transportation Corporation Act
- Bill 51, An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Election Act
- 19. Second Reading of Bills
- 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Bill 3, Carbon Tax Repeal Act
- Tabled Document 445-20(1), 2025 Review of Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Compensation and Benefits Report
- Tabled Document 483-20(1), 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report
- 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

## 22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2
- Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027

## 23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

UNEDITED HANSARD