

NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 55

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Hon. Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)
*Premier; Minister of Executive and
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Minister responsible for Indigenous
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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, March 12, 2021**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Patterk Netser, Mr. Calvin Pedersen, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Mr. Craig Simailak, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 9:00*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, can you say the opening prayer, please, Mr. Netser.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning, Nunavummiut. Those who are following the proceedings, welcome. (interpretation ends) Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, members, and good morning to the people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Are there any nays? There are none. (interpretation) We will proceed to Item 19. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64 with Mr. Akoak in the Chair.

In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 107 – 5(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

I ask the members to remain at their desks so that we immediately proceed with the Committee of the Whole.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

Item 19: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nunavummiut. Welcome to the Assembly. Being a Friday, what are we doing this morning? Moo business!

>> *Laughter*

Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again good morning. Mr. Chairman, we wish to commence with the review of the 2021-22 Main Estimates for the Department of Environment, followed by the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Legislative Assembly. If time permits, we would commence with the review of the supplementary Bills 60 and 61. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Rumbolt. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 59?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Environment
– Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let the officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. For the record, Minister Savikataaq, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Deputy Minister Jimmy Noble Jr., to his right is Nikki Nweze, the Director of Corporate Services, and to my left is Mr. Steven Pinksen, the ADM of Environment.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present my department's proposed operations and maintenance budget for the next fiscal year, which is unchanged from 2020-21. The Department of Environment's proposed budget for 2021-22 is \$24.7 million.

The Department of Environment continues to maximize the impact of allocated funds by engaging in collaborative partnerships with outside organizations. In 2020-21 we leveraged approximately \$6.2 million from outside sources for various projects. This amount was consistent with funding secured in previous years and was applied to

programs in all divisions within the department. We expect to be equally successful in obtaining funding from outside sources in the coming fiscal year.

Avatimik Kamatsiarniq, or environmental stewardship, remains a key focus of the department, as does our commitment to recruiting and retaining a representative workforce. In the coming year we will continue to work to increase Inuit employment in the department. The department is recruiting various levels of trainee positions within the wildlife, research and environmental sections.

Nunavummiut continue to see the impacts of climate change in our territory. We all understand that action must be taken to reduce and mitigate its effects. In the coming year the department will continue to work with the Government of Canada to implement the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* and to finalize Canada's newly drafted climate plan, 'A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy.'

COVID-19 restrictions delayed my department's plan to work with businesses across Nunavut to develop spill reduction training. In the coming fiscal year these courses will be offered when our environmental protection officers perform their annual community visits in consideration of any COVID-19 restrictions. Further, the department will begin the review of the *Environmental Protection Act* in 2021-22.

The department is responsible for the administration of the *Wildlife Act*, the co-management of wildlife under the *Nunavut Agreement*, and for fulfilling the Government of Nunavut's wildlife management responsibilities under federal legislation, national and international agreements and conventions.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, wildlife surveys planned for the 2020-21 year were cancelled or delayed. This pushes some of the research and monitoring priorities in the 2020-23 business plan to future years. Despite the restrictions, Government of Nunavut biologists completed a large-scale abundance survey of the Dolphin and Union caribou on November 2, 2020. The survey covered an area 20 times larger than the 2018 survey of the same herd. All Nunavut co-management partners with an interest in Dolphin and Union caribou were directly involved in the planning of the survey. The preliminary results from the survey showed no significant decline from the 2018 survey results.

The Department of Environment's proposed 2021-24 business plan identifies our intent to develop and implement several wildlife management initiatives over the next three fiscal years. This includes a three-year survey of the Lancaster Sound polar bear subpopulation starting this spring.

Caribou management continues to be a high priority for the department. In the coming fiscal year the department will undertake a large survey of northeast mainland caribou populations to determine the population and distribution of smaller herds that have not been previously surveyed. The department will also continue to monitor the recovery of the Baffin Island caribou through annual composition surveys and movement ecology research.

Following a year which saw unprecedented use of territorial parks, my department will work to enhance visitor experience while conserving our natural and cultural heritage.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Environment balances the need for resource-based economic growth with the conservation of our wildlife and ecosystems for future generations of Nunavummiut. Our work is guided by *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and scientific research to ensure meaningful progress in achieving our goals to benefit the territory.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our business plan with you, and I would be pleased to take any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Does the chair of the standing committee have comments? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and 2021-24 Business Plan of the Department of Environment. The department's proposed 2021-22 operations and maintenance budget is \$24,709,000. This is unchanged from the 2020-21 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is decreasing by 1.0 PYs to 131.5.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. The department's proposed 2021-22 main estimates include \$345,000 in funding for a new "Renewable Energy Rebate for Cabin and Homeowners Program." The standing committee looks forward to the department providing additional details on this new program. The standing committee supports the principle of the program, and encourages the department to consider ways that non-profit organizations which undertake on-the-land activities that benefit communities, including hunters and trappers organizations, can benefit from the program.

The department's Support for Harvesters and Wildlife Co-Management Policy was approved in May 2017 and expires on March 31, 2022. A number of different funding programs fall under the provisions of these policies, including the Active Harvester Program. The standing committee continues to recommend that the minister begin the practice of tabling comprehensive annual reports in the Legislative Assembly on the administration of the Support for Harvesters and Wildlife Co-Management Policy.

Nunavut's current *Wildlife Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2003. Section 176 of the legislation requires the minister to prepare and table in the Legislative Assembly a comprehensive report every five years concerning wildlife management programs and related matters. The 2018 report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on June 5, 2019. The report indicates that "...some of the greatest threats to the long-term viability of Kivalliq caribou herds include development effects, such as roads; internet sales of caribou meat and the associated increased harvest." This is an issue that has been raised in the Legislative Assembly by a number of members. The standing committee

continues to note that this is a complex issue and continues to recognize that the engagement of all parties, including Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, regional wildlife boards, hunters and trappers organizations, and airlines operating in Nunavut, will be required to address it.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of October 21, 2019, the minister announced that he had "accepted the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's final decision for the Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan." The standing committee encourages the minister to provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the co-management plan.

The Department of Environment is responsible for the government's Climate Change Secretariat. In 2018 a televised standing committee hearing was held on the Auditor General's report on climate change in Nunavut. The 2018-19 *Climate Change Secretariat Annual Report* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2020. The standing committee looks forward to the timely tabling of future annual reports. The department's 2019-2022 business plan indicated that one of its priorities was to "...develop Community Energy Plans in communities across Nunavut." The department's 2020-23 business plan indicated that "...Grise Fiord, Sanikiluaq, Arctic Bay and Kugluktuk have been engaged to start developing Community Energy Plans and have been formally invited to participate in a Clean Energy Gathering in fall 2019 to launch the project." The department's draft 2021-22 business plan indicates that "this project experienced delays because of COVID-19, but it is expected that two community [energy] plans will be completed in this fiscal year. The targeted communities are Nauyasat and Coral Harbour." The standing committee will be monitoring progress in these areas.

The department's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that its "Water Program" and "Contaminated Sites Program" have been combined into a new "Environmental Science Program." Its total proposed budget is \$1.65 million. The standing committee will continue to monitor the progress of this initiative, as well as the progress of the complementary initiative of the Department of Community and Government Services to develop a new "Drinking Water Strategic Framework."

The Minister of Environment is responsible for administering the territory's *Environmental Protection Act*, which includes provisions concerning the discharge of contaminants into the environment. The standing committee continues to recommend that the minister begin the practice of tabling an annual report in the Legislative Assembly that contains comprehensive information regarding the administration of the *Environmental Protection Act*, including detailed information regarding enforcement actions against entities suspected of contravening the law and expenditures related to contaminated sites.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and 2021-24 Business Plan of the Department of Environment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Rumbolt. Are there any general comments? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister. *Tunngasugit*, Mr. Noble, Mr. Pinksen, and Ms. Nweze.

Before I begin, I would just like to recognize the accomplishments on behalf of the department. I know that there are many important programs that are run under the Department of Environment and the department is doing some amazing work. I would also like to identify the work that has been done by the Climate Change Secretariat and their policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change matters, and how it affects our territory; including the new program that is in development to incentivize alternative energy sources for homeowners, as well as the youth advisory council, which I saw was recently advertised. I was very happy to share that with the public.

I would also like to publicly state my overall admiration and deep respect for Ms. Nweze. Women represent a growing demographic in the accounting and finance fields, but still do have lower rates of leadership positions, not just here but across the country and across the world. It's individuals like Ms. Nweze and our comptroller general, Susan Nichols, as well as our sole female Inuk CPA, Roxanne Ruediger, who really set examples, and are role models for young Inuit and young female Inuit.

I just wanted to put Nikki on the spot, and really say that the department is lucky to have you. I feel that Ms. Nweze is one of the strongest executive finance officers in the government, and you're very lucky to have her. I'm sure she is a great asset to your executive management team, as well as your program managers.

I'm sure Ms. Nweze and her office have played an integral role in allowing the department to secure alternative funding, such as the \$6 million that the minister had identified in the opening comments. I just wanted to put that on the record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. General comments? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is something that I have brought up a number of times; the sale of caribou meat, especially from the Kivalliq. Inuit traditions have changed. Traditionally Inuit would not sell meat. The caribou in the Kivalliq are part of the Beverly Qamanirjuaq caribou herd, and are harvested by hunters from the Northwest Territories, Manitoba and Nunavut. These different jurisdictions all hunt that herd.

There is currently no control of the sale of the meat, and some individuals will sell caribou online at a very expensive price. It is like \$400 to \$600 per caribou. I want to support hunters that hunt properly, but then there seem to be many other people who just kill caribou and leave it behind.

Sometimes one hunter will get five, 10, or up to 14 caribou at once, so I encourage the minister to please work with different organizations like Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the hunters and trappers organizations. It has become quite obvious that for our future, if the Kivalliq caribou are going to continue to be sold, they are going to deplete in numbers very fast.

Additionally, sometimes we can see caribou that has been hunted and just thrown away because they don't have any fat. They just get left behind. They just get the tongue, and that is not the traditional Inuit way. We have to think of ways to teach the younger generation of hunters how they can skin the caribou properly, and what uses there are for different parts of the caribou; for example, clothing. Lastly, I would like to say whenever caribou are crossing rivers, hunters help over there. They have people watching over there from the government and that has to continue. When the caribou are crossing sometimes, when there's a lot of shooting going on it gets dangerous. So I wanted to mention that too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. General comments. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of the Environment's proposed main estimates is a little bit below, and it is all about environmental stewardship and for the hunters. I know they're going to be looking at the hunters more because of the caribou. On page four, it mentions *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, and they use *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* to move forward. *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is vast, it encompasses a lot of things. Yesterday, we asked questions about it to the Department of Culture and Heritage.

Management plans have been put in place, and once they are finalized, I know that there will be a large amount of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* content. We can't see them now, but I'm sure that they will be included and we'll be able to see them. It's good to see that it is mentioned here. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. General comments. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and your officials. I don't have a long comment. I would like to add to what my colleague, Ms. Towtongie, was talking about, and that is people who sell caribou. That it is becoming very worrisome because Coral Harbour is on an island, and although it's a big island, it is becoming worrisome people are selling caribou from that herd too. We are getting worried about them. My constituents keep calling me about it, saying that we need to do something about it. It is also talked about on the local radio station in Coral Harbour.

Within the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, it states that any Inuk can sell caribou. However, if we want our future generations to have wildlife to hunt, then we have to start doing something about it now. It's getting very worrisome. So I encourage our minister to sit with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and have meetings about it. It would be good if they could do that before we run out of caribou. That's what I wanted to say. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. General comments? Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody. I would like to congratulate the minister and his department for completing the survey last year on the Dolphin-Union caribou herd, even though there were COVID restrictions and a lot of hoops to jump through to make that happen, so I'm happy you did that.

I'm also looking forward to seeing the results of the large survey for the northeast mainland caribou populations. We need to keep an eye on all the caribou populations in our country. These caribou know no borders, so they walk wherever they want to walk.

In saying that, perhaps we could work with other governments in the territory who are our neighbours here, and the provinces along with the airlines. We could all work in collaboration just to ensure that our youth and future generations have a source of food and clothing, and we can continue to practice our culture and heritage for many generations to come.

So I'm pleased to see the work you guys have been doing up to now and I'm very excited to see the upcoming work, and I hope that we see very good results. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Seeing no more names, we will go page by page. Page I-4 Corporate Management. Questions. Any questions? Seeing none. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, colleagues. (interpretation ends) I should say that I'm proud to be, I believe, the MLA who has come to work the earliest ever in history; including, I beat, I believe Mr. Rumbolt and Mr. Savikataaq even though I don't have a reputation for being early.

My first question is about the new rebate program. Its \$345,000, if the minister can briefly describe how the funding will be handed out in terms of maximums that can be funded to individuals, and whether there will be any breakdown by community or by region, how the money is allocated. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to explain this program. There are two programs within this \$345,000 that we are requesting. The first portion is the rebate program for homeowners, and that's to help out with the net metering. Qulliq Energy Corporation has a net metering program, but due to start-up costs there has not been that much of an uptake on it.

Mr. Chairman, we're working with the Housing Corporation on this as they have the means to deliver these programs. The policy will be the Department of Environment's policy on how this runs, but we will work with the Housing Corporation to administer the

program. The way we envision it is it is not finalized yet, but it'll be application-based, so it's not going to be divvied up by region or community. It's a rebate program where you can get up to \$30,000 on a 50 percent rebate. Take for example you spend \$50,000, you send in all of the receipts, then you would be reimbursed for \$25,000; 50 percent rebate up to a maximum of \$30,000.

The other portion, the cabin portion, we will be administering that ourselves through the Department of Environment. It's not finalized yet, and it's going to come out a little bit later than the homeowners one as the Housing Corporation is set up to administer that a lot quicker because it fits within some of their energy efficient programs that they already administer.

For the cabin portion, we see it as a up to \$5,000 rebate, it's not finalized yet, but this will be an example: some cabin owner buys \$5,000 or \$6,000 worth of renewable equipment, whether it be solar panels, wind generator, regulators, batteries and then they would submit that receipt and they would get reimbursed for up to \$5,000. Right now we have \$245,000 for homeowners, and \$100,000 for cabins. It is not set in stone, and it depends on the uptake. We can shift those numbers and, if this is a very popular program on both ends, both for cabin owners and homeowners, then we would request for more funding for next year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Thank you for explaining the rules. Are these applications going to be income tested? You say, for example, I have an annual household income of \$200,000; the very highest income bracket. In that case, are high income earners eligible to apply for this reimbursement? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The goal of both programs for homeowners and cabin owners is to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint that we emit. Whether you are a low-income earner or a high-income earner, you still emit greenhouse gases from your residence or your cabin, so no, there will not be an income limit on these. Both of these programs are application-based and there is no income limit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I'm a bit disappointed that there wouldn't be some sort of upper income limit. That is just a comment. Some people have incredibly fancy cabins and incredibly fancy houses. If you are earning \$200,000 a year, I don't know if government support is really needed. That is just a comment.

In terms of vacancies within the department, in terms of your conservation officers, I'm looking at the Inuit employment plan. What specific issues are impacting the recruitment of conservation officers at the moment, and roughly how many vacant positions do you have? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our biggest barrier to recruiting officers in the communities is housing. When there is no housing, we generally are not very successful in filling a vacancy for our conservation officers, and I'm just trying to get the numbers in front of you.

We have some vacancies, I'll read them off. In the Kivalliq right now we have: in Arviat, a conservation officer II, vacant; we have the regional manager in Arviat, vacant; and, in Baker Lake, we have the officer II, vacant.

In the Kitikmeot this is a new position. In Kugluktuk we have a manager trainee.

In the Baffin region we have: Grise Fiord, officer II, vacant; Qikiqtarjuaq, officer III, vacant; Igloolik, officer III, vacant; Arctic Bay, officer II, vacant; and in Pond Inlet, North Baffin regional manager is vacant.

For the territorial staff, in Arviat we have the wildlife deterrent specialist that is vacant; and in Iqaluit, a coordinator trainee, and that is a new position and it is still vacant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That is concerning that staff housing is an issue. This is not the only department that we have been hearing from in terms of these issues.

I don't understand why you are not able to secure housing for those conservation officer positions. My understanding is they are the top of the priority list, along with health professionals and I believe, I forget what the other one is. I think it is justice, or safety.

Are there any solutions to this in terms of the staff housing crunch? What is the Department of Environment's plan to try and get more housing so you can hire for those positions? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is right that staff housing is a major issue for a lot of the departments in all of Nunavut, but more so in the smaller communities. I don't have a ready solution other than building more staff houses. We need more staff housing, but we also need more public housing. So, it is always a battle

every year. They have to decide how many staff houses and how many public houses, and both of those needs are real, and the needs are way greater than what can be produced, so I don't have a ready solution.

Some of the positions have been vacant for a while. One example is Qikiqtarjuaq because of housing, but we have secured housing there now, and we are in the process of filling that position. So we just keep diligently working on it and I don't have a solution for the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main. Are you done? Next name on my list: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions and I'm not sure what it means in Inuktitut. One of the priorities for 2021-22 is make changes to the (interpretation ends) Climate Change Strategic Plan. (interpretation) What does that mean in Inuktitut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to answer your question. The Climate Change Secretariat deals with climate change and we have to make changes to the legislation because we have to work diligently on climate change. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you. I recollected that in Inuktitut, as I too share in the belief that climate change did not originate in Nunavut, as most of the pollutants causing the changes are stemming from southern locales.

Nonetheless, let me continue here. It speaks to several communities on page 183 of the business plan where the communities of Coral Harbour and Nauyasat are dealing with inefficient energy generators, so they are planning to replace the power plants.

Now, in thinking of small communities like Chesterfield Inlet, are there any future plans to also have their power plants replaced? This is my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The two communities of Nauyasat and Coral Harbour will be first. During the previous meeting of the group to determine which communities would be studied in terms of energy conservation or more efficient power generation, and there were mainly two communities who were interested.

If other communities also want to have their energy efficiency studied, then more technicians would travel to perform that, however, the first study will be more or less a pilot for this process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name on my list: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, in looking at the global climate change, as it is at the forefront of many news articles over many years, including the loss of multi-year ice, icebergs and our glaciers are also melting, and suggestions stemming from so-called experts and scientists are anticipating the sea levels to rise, causing more places to flood.

There are many fears about a minimal rise in the seas affecting the globe, and many locations are constantly checking their water levels. Does that occur here as well with sea level studies from his department? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there are climate experts anticipating the rising sea levels which they imagine will occur in the short-term, but in terms of the marine waters in Nunavut, our levels are not impacted as it is going to the centre.

Back in the history, when Nunavut was mainly frozen and there were humongous ice caps and glaciers, the land was depressed, and this is called in English (interpretation) glaciers (interpretation) that caused the land to become depressed and now isostatic rebounding is occurring with some lands rising as a result.

Within Nunavut there are areas rising and our sea levels are not really changing for the most part, but in the warmer climates, the water is indeed rising but at this time, Nunavut hasn't seen much change in our sea levels. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you. That is good to hear because some of us are quite close to the coast and we do keep an eye on it so that the water level doesn't reach our houses. Some of us don't believe that the water level is rising.

(interpretation ends) They say that education is lifeline learning, so in your opening comments, Mr. Chairman, the minister notes on page 4, "Baffin Island caribou through annual composition surveys..." (interpretation) I understand the composition, but could you elaborate further on that sentence? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. The composition survey is to see how many male caribou there are, how females, and Mr. Chairman, in the spring we usually count the population to see how many females there are and how have calves.

For example, if there were 100 with calves and 25 calves, we would like at how many survived the year. We keep an eye on the growth population. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name on my list: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to welcome the minister and his officials.

Within your business plan, specifically on page 182 is wording on the bottom part, and the English wording is (interpretation ends) Climate Change Secretariat (interpretation) and I wanted to ask if the minister can provide a bit of background on that statement? Can the minister outline this so we can understand why this paragraph is included? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This concerns the climate change, as it is happening. As it states, the climate change secretariat is responsible for this and the main focus here is that government departments are given support.

For example, based on studies, some communities are being affected by climate change in terms of permafrost melt and how that is impacted the stability of houses, and what funding regions are requesting. That would go toward climate change. That is what it refers to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In hearing that response, it clarifies it in my mind and I seem to understand that (interpretation ends) science (interpretation) is suggesting that it is, but to me, I believe it stems from the inside.

The reason why I have brought it up is because *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* is not mentioned within this wording. The reasoning for my comments is due to the fact that our colleague representing Aivilik spoke about the rising sea levels, but it isn't noticeable up here.

Now, what is really obvious is the changing climate as it has completely changed according to Inuit as more lands are slumping due to the permafrost melting, and it is affecting the whole circumpolar lands or world as it may have cracked.

Due to that reason, I wanted to ask about the elders' groups and if it has been discussed in those forums, and I believe the minister is aware of that, as the elders also have to

provide assistance to the government. I would like to hear a short summary if he can comment on that. I want to understand, hence my query on it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, with respect to *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, we try to utilize and actually in Igloolik, there is a group we call in English (interpretation ends) IQ (interpretation) board that records and collects the knowledge of our elders, so we try to collect this information. We are using this expertise in various initiatives when required. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me move to another point. This is written on page 184, also in the business plan and refers to (interpretation ends) wildlife operations (interpretation) and the policy mentioned refers to an (interpretations) objective (interpretation) written as three bullets.

The second last bullet is the one they wish to utilize for the global consultation on what the animals that can be harvested, and to quote (interpretation ends) “Meet national and international obligations (interpretation) and the reason why I bring it up is due to the Department of Environment managing the wildlife, and in my perception, it surpasses their legislated powers.

This is why I bring it up, as we need to make improvements, although it is written in that, but personally, I believe it is beyond their scope, and why I mention it, is because certain limitations on harvesting, such as our polar bear quotas are not increasing although their populations are growing by Inuit.

What is the situation with caribou? It is more difficult due to the various herds, but if I could ask the minister to explain what is happening with population studies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I can provide a bit of background information as both (interpretation ends) national (interpretation) within Canada and (interpretation ends) international (interpretation) meaning outside of Canada contexts.

I will use this as an example of the populations within Canada now, and we have provinces we have to partner with on animals that exist in inter-jurisdictional areas, crossing from one to the others.

I will use polar bear as an example. Some bears cross over to Manitoba, and the bears around Sanikiluaq are also shared with Quebec and Ontario, so for those populations, we

must work with them in order to properly manage the population and to ensure the quotas don't result in over-harvesting.

We share data and research with other jurisdiction, and with respect to our international agreements, many of the Baffin polar bear populations are shared with Greenland, so those bears are an international population, so we must work with their government.

Another matter involving international issues, relates to certain wildlife populations that cannot be exported outside of Canada, or if the data shows a declining population, then no commercial sales are allowed for those species, and we can use polar bears as an example.

Some populations or their (interpretation ends) sub-population (interpretation) that are separate only occupy Canada and their populations are considered low, while others are shared with international and we are working with various governments to try to properly manage our wildlife populations in Nunavut.

And as well, to ensure that our hunters in Nunavut are able to sustainably harvest these species, either for consumption or for commercial sales, as this will allow the populations to remain sustainable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also appreciate his response to my earlier question. Now, I have a query on this issue, related to that provision. The funds that the department asks to be appropriated for operations are around \$24 million.

I was thinking about the various animals we can harvest and when biologists suspect that the populations are declining, then more discussions are held online to determine the best course of action to protect the population, and in the case of polar bears, the example is a sex-bias.

When that occurs, are other jurisdictions also helping fund the studies, to use this example, the federal government can direct our government to undertake work. The federal government could direct us to do a study by saying, "this population is declining" so would they include funding towards that project?

I am using this example and also that we may get that direction from other jurisdictions or what we call in English (interpretation ends) third party (interpretation) so I wonder if other parties can provide funding assistance especially for studies.

With regards to this idea, I want to understand if other funding agencies provide assistance hence my query to the minister, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is a very good question. Earlier, in my opening address, I mentioned that funding for the department for operation funding surpasses \$24 million.

And we also have a fund of \$6 million that we apply towards from non-governmental funding agencies, or request funding assistance from the federal government. The total then would be the \$24 million plus \$6 million, as that is roughly 25%, half of half of the total.

So, this fund is generally sufficient for the department to conduct the population studies we are required to, and like he mentioned, third parties will fund some projects without fail, so this \$6 million fund is close to the amount we request as additional funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked this question because near our home community, there were some incidents that our wildlife officers had no jurisdiction over, as they don't manage marine mammals, but it forms part of our environment, the wildlife we harvest from the oceans.

I am talking about the killing of several bowheads over the summer near Kugaaruk and Gulf of Boothia. I am asking about this matter, as I would like to get more ideas on how to resolve this new challenge we are seeing about this marine issue. I want to clearly understand this, so thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the issues surrounding marine organisms, fish and marine mammals such as narwhal, seals and whales are all under the federal department of DFO.

However, we are usually working in conjunction with DFO on several marine mammal populations where communities harvest but there are not too many DFO employees situated within Nunavut, as they have a limited number of employees who work for DFO here in Nunavut.

We work with them, provide support on marine management issues, however, we are not directly responsible for any marine environmental or wildlife populations as the federal government is responsible under legislation for marine wildlife. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and to your officials. I've just got a couple of questions and part of it is about the subject of vacant positions.

The position in Baker Lake, he mentioned earlier, has been vacant and I believe it has been vacant since the fall time, one of the positions. Can I get an update on that position, please? Is it going to be advertised soon? Is there anything in the works for that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have quite a few number of positions with HR that need to be advertised and we will be trying to fill that position as quickly as possible. We're thankful that Baker Lake has two conservation officers there for services are still being provided by the conservation officer that's still there, but we will fill it as soon as we can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for the response. Is there anything that's going to impede the hiring of the vacant position in Baker Lake? Earlier you mentioned that staff housing is an issue. Is there any other impedance that could cause delay of hiring the conservation officer for Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just was handed the briefing note on it. We're waiting on housing for the officer II position in Baker Lake. Therefore once we get housing, we would be able to advertise it. Mr. Chairman, we find that when we advertise positions that are more technical or that you need more education on, it's hard to get a suitable candidate without providing housing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the response. Next I would like to move on with regard to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. Does your department meet with the neighbouring jurisdictions on the subject of the population of the herd, and do you have agreements in place to ensure all jurisdictions are doing everything possible to prevent the continued decline of the herds? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot of our caribou herds are inter-jurisdictional, not just Qamanirjuaq and Beverly, and we work with our co-management partners and adjacent provinces or territories in that. We also work with the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. We work with and consult with every jurisdiction where there is inter-jurisdiction travel between the caribou herds. Our goal is to manage the caribou so that there is caribou for

future generations, and the provinces and territories have that same goal too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would you guys have a plan in place so that the decline doesn't continue? I know you guys are talking to each other, but do you guys have other plans in place so that we don't continue the decline for our future generations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The caribou herds are more or less managed as the subpopulations. The populations that need to be within Nunavut, they get a total allowable harvest if we feel that there is a need for one and there are currently, I believe, three that have a total allowable harvest. There is one on Baffin Island. There is one on Southampton Island. There's the Dolphin and Union has a total allowable harvest. The Bathurst has a total allowable harvest. If need be, we then would put total allowable harvest on any other caribou herds within Nunavut if we feel there's a conservation issue.

In the Northwest Territories they have some of the caribou herds they're not allowed to hunt them at all. So whatever action is needed to protect the caribou herd is usually taken by either ourselves or by the provinces or territories that have the same caribou herd. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last question: When Nunavut does a total allowable harvest on a herd. If that herd goes to another neighbouring jurisdiction does the neighbouring jurisdiction mirror the total allowable harvest as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a little more complicated than that. What happens or could happen is if there is a total allowable harvest for that caribou population and it's inter-jurisdictional then they are normally it would with the total allowable harvest will be split up on historical use of that caribou herd, whether it be 50-50, 70-30 depends on the historical use of that caribou population by the territory or the province. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pond Inlet was included in being identified as being a location that has a position requiring filling as it is vacant. The current GN housing units in Pond Inlet are not all inhabited.

Will that position open up in the short-term, since Pond Inlet does not have the barrier of unavailable housing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. In Pond Inlet, they have the management position or in English (interpretation ends) regional manager (interpretation) there, and the interview process is underway. The applicants are currently scheduled to be interviewed now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, Inuit are told to stop harvesting caribou when the population levels become too low by the scientists. Can the Government of Nunavut also consider predator control such as culling wolves?

If wolf populations are present, they subsist on caribou as well, and I believe wolverines will also eat caribou, especially more in the Kivalliq caribou herds, as we have very low levels here, if it hasn't been wiped out.

Has the department also considered predator control as part of caribou herd management issues, so that we can ensure our caribou populations increase and to look at predator populations that also subsist on caribou? Is that included? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there are cases like that, and if our colleague can recall the situation last year in Nunavut, there was a wolf population survey and in some regions, wolf hunters were paid a bounty of \$300 once they submitted the head of the wolf to the local conservation officers.

This was just to help offset costs for the wolf hunters, and to entice more wolf hunters. We know wolves eat caribou; nonetheless, in the Baffin region we expect a very low wolf population due to the low caribou population levels. Wolves are most likely also impacted in the Baffin region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lastly more finds will be repatriated to Nunavut because they cannot be bought because worldwide they do not really want to buy polar bear hides.

Maybe we can do what we want with our polar bears because they do not want the hides globally so that we can have them for food, and eat polar bear meat. Can you consider that, or are you leery of a world opinion in trying to do that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, with respect to polar bears and unlimited harvesting, we have never considered that scenario as the tag system for harvesting polar bears will continue with the current data.

If we allowed unlimited harvesting for polar bears, some areas would immediately see large numbers of polar bears harvested, and if we are proven to not be properly managing our polar bear populations, then the federal government may withdraw the mandate, and resume their management of polar bears, as they could conceivably withdraw the territorial government mandate.

So, the federal government could centralize control if we don't manage the populations. We have not considered the currently on the total allowable harvest a polar bears will be maintained, but we always survey the population number of polar bears, and if the polar bears are increasing then total allowable harvest will increase and if the population starts going down, the total allowable harvest would decrease.

I can say that globally we manage the polar bears very well here in Canada, and we have always carefully managed our polar bear populations as we have the best practices to ensure that the populations remain steady and not decrease. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, To be Voted, \$5,880,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page I-5. Program Management.

My apologies to Adam, I did not see your hands come up. This is a reminder, put your hands up, if you have to stand, let me know.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So earlier, sorry, throughout the questions and responses so far this morning, it is clear that staff housing is a barrier to hiring employees within the Department of Environment and the minister stated that, you know, it is an ongoing issue with every department and it is a difficult decision for the Government of Nunavut decide whether to build public housing or staff housing. From the minister stated he does not have a clear solution to the matter and for the record, I just wanted to provide one.

I believe that the problem, the issue isn't limited to the staff housing portfolio, or supply. I believe that the issue the length of time employees are spending in staff housing. We

know there are employees who reside in staff housing for decades, and in fact there are a number of employees who retire in staff housing every year and I know many communities, there aren't many houses to buy and purchase specifically for employees within the Department of Environment or in any department overall, but in other communities there are, but the issue with the length of time employees spend in staff housing is a systemic matter and I believe that the real issue there is no incentive to leave staff housing.

I know the generous staff housing subsidy is available to employees, but it far outweighs the household allowance that is available to employees not in staff housing.

Further, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's income eligibility requirements exclude many employees that are in staff housing that could get out of staff housing, but have the income to sustain homeownership. I know this doesn't exactly relate to the Department of Environment's budgets and business plan but I just wanted to put that out there on the record to provide a solution to the minister's problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member's suggestions and comments are well taken, but they are directed at the wrong department. We're not in charge of housing. We ask for housing and when we allocate it, the person is entitled to stay in that staff housing until he or she leaves their employment. So the member can take up that fight with the appropriate department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, do you have any other questions? No. Thank you. On Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted \$5,880,000 agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page I-5. Program Management. Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've just got a couple of questions I think for the minister. Your department's proposed 2021-22 main estimates include \$115,000 in funding for the Active Harvester Program. How much has your department spent to date under this program during the 2020-21 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have spent all of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's good to hear. Moving on. During its review of your department's 2019-2020 and 2020-21 main estimates, the Standing Committee recommended that an annual report concerning the administration of the programs under your department's support for harvesters and wildlife co-management policy be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. What is the status of developing this annual report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After the fiscal year, our goal is to table those in the spring sitting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. The Government of Nunavut provides funding to allow organizations such as municipalities and district education authorities to meet annually in order to collectively discuss issues of concern. COVID providing, do you support providing funding to allow Nunavut's 25 hunters and trappers organizations to meet annually as a group? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We support community consultation and we support getting feedback from all of the communities. When there is a need for it, we do have Nunavut-wide meetings, but not just for the sake of having a meeting. If there is a pressing issue that is related to Nunavut-wide, then we do have those meetings. Most of the time the issues are regional, and we have regional meetings.

For example, I'll use the Baffin Island caribou management plan. We've had meetings with all of the Baffin hunters and trappers organizations members here, plus met them in the town. When we had the polar bear management meetings, that was Nunavut-wide. So, it depends on the situation. We do support getting the input from the hunters and trappers organization. If needed, we do have Nunavut-wide meetings, but they are not that often. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I know that some of your program's areas were transferred over to economic development and that is the sealing, seal programs, fine items, but the Department of Environment has retained some programs, I believe trapping and fur bearers right now.

I wonder if the minister can summarize what the new arrangement looks like. So, all of this seal skin stuff, seal skin related programs are within ED&T, but if its fur bearers like

wolves and foxes, it is within Environment. How is that new arrangement working out? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the trapper or the hunter that sells fur in the communities, they will see no difference at all. We still buy all the long fur, plus we still buy all the seal skins from the hunters. In terms of in the communities, what the hunters and the trappers that bring fur to sell to the conservation officers have been doing all these years, nothing on that end has changed. We still buy all the fur that we used to buy; whether it be a fox, wolverine, or a seal skin. We still do exactly the same thing as we used to do.

The only thing is that the sealing and fishing has gone to ED&T, but we have kept the portion where we buy the product from the hunters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) And I usually ask at least one question about this each year.

Why does it appear that there is not a much support for trapping foxes in the community? Is it that the trappers are getting older, is it that young people are not interested in it anymore, is it that the fur prices are too low? From the department's perspective, what explains that kind of stagnation when it comes to trapping? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a difference between supporting the trapper and the trapper actually trapping. I believe that we do support all of our trappers within Nunavut, we support them well.

Right now for foxes, if they come to their conservation officer, I believe they get \$45 for every pelt, plus we pay the shipping to the auction house. If it sells for more than the amount that they were given, then they get that remainder. We buy all furs; we give them an advance and send it to the auction house.

Plus, we will also pay for the shipping of frozen, raw furs that the trapper or the hunter wants to ship down south to a legitimate fur buyer. So, we do support them, but I just think that there are less and less people in Nunavut interested in trapping and being trappers. It seems to be the trend. The older trappers that are not trapping anymore are not being replaced by the younger ones. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I will suggest again that the department should consider establishing programs that mirror those in the Northwest Territories, which there are different initiatives; education, recognition of youngest trapper, most productive trapper, etcetera. I have made that suggestion in previous years and I will make it again.

On page 339 it mentions your environmental assessment work. My question is: what major projects did the Department of Environment participate in for environmental assessment in the current fiscal year? I'm looking for a list of major projects that the department participated. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll answer this as best as I understand it. We were one of the interveners for the phase 2 of the Baffinland Mary River project. If there are any Nunavut Impact Review Board hearings, then we are a part of the process and we give presentations. We were involved in Baffinland phase 2 and the Meliadine saline discharge in Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm almost done; I know others have questions.

On pages 188 and 189 of your business plan they mention the land use planning process, the Nunavut Planning Commission, and it also mentions the capacity needed within the department. That was a priority. Can the minister please provide an update on where the work towards a final land use plan is at and whether the department has added capacity to participate in that or what the capacity is for the department? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification, I'll say that the Nunavut Land Use Plan Commission is not what we're talking about. That talks about our environment's land use planning capabilities within our own department. It does not have anything to do with the Nunavut Planning Commission's ongoing work that they are doing to get Nunavut a land use plan, just for the clarity, and we're working on our own capacity for us to do land use planning within our own department, nothing to do with the Nunavut Planning Commission. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I guess I wasn't clear. It's on page 189 of the business plan where the priority item for this fiscal year was "Review capacity needs for dealing with the implementation of the final Nunavut Land Use Plan by the Nunavut Planning Commission." And the status says, "An

internal review was undertaken. Capacity needs were identified and filled. This priority has been completed.” What are the capacity needs? What capacity needs were identified and what capacity needs were filled? I guess that’s my question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That’s to make sure that when the Nunavut Land Use Plan Commission finishes their work and Nunavut has a land use plan that has been signed by the Nunavut government, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the federal government, then whatever the obligations it will have to that land use plan, we want to make sure that we have the capability to fulfill our mandate once the land use plan has been passed by all three parties. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main. (interpretation) Oh, you’re done? (interpretation ends) Thank you. Before I go to the next person on my list, we will take a 15-minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 10:29 and resumed at 10:45

Chairman: Welcome back, committee. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. There goes my missing piece.

>>Laughter

Next name on my list: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You make us smile, so I thank you for that.

(interpretation ends) Before I go on to my questions, for the record, when I mention that I don’t believe in...I think I was understood about not believing in climate change. I do know that climate change is a problem, but it was just a fact that the water levels are not rising. It was that area that I did not believe that it was happening, so just for the record.

(interpretation) We already dealt with polar bear management issues under (interpretation ends) Corporate Management. (interpretation) This is (interpretation ends) Program Management, (interpretation) but I think we can still deal with polar bears, if I’m not mistaken. Mr. Chairman, is it okay? Okay.

Now, with the theory about climate change, many people are concerned about this iconic species, especially when they are ignorant of the real facts, and who rarely visit the Arctic or the north. I would like to ask the minister about whether the polar bear population is increasing or if it’s of concern. That’s my first question to the minister. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The polar bear populations have their own management units, so each area has their own population studies, to use this example of (interpretation ends) Western Hudson Bay, Southern Hudson Bay (interpretation) as several units total nine or even eleven population units in Nunavut.

Since they each have their unique population studies, some populations haven't changed, some are increasing, and some are decreasing slightly. However, variances exist in our polar bear populations, but overall in looking at Nunavut, I can say that polar bears are not disappearing drastically. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you. Now, with icebergs and other types of ice receding, the areas where polar bears hunt are also impacted, according to the theories. If that was the case, the polar bears harvested would all be very skinny, but hunters usually catch very healthy and fat polar bears. Has his department also noted that discrepancy between the theory and reality? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have noted there are only a few situations where studies have been undertaken, but not too focussed on the fatness of the animals.

Some bears are quite skinny, while others are very healthy and fat and as long as the population levels are sustainable, then most bears are quite healthy. However some bears are less skilled and become skinny, but that is an exception. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Yes. Now, with regards to Naujaat and Coral Harbour, we tend to have hunters who travel from Arviat, Whale Cove and Chesterfield Inlet, who travel to hunt narwhals in Naujaat, and also to the north of Coral Harbour at a place called *Aqiarunnak* to enjoy the scenery.

We get hunters that travel to our areas, and we enjoy meeting hunters as we see people we rarely see otherwise, and it is always delightful to see new Inuit when out hunting. They also sometimes harvest polar bears as defence kills while camping. Polar bears sometimes enter camps and are killed, although not at every camp or trip.

But the polar bears killed are taken from the Coral Harbour quota, as we are part of Foxe Basin management unit, including Naujaat as we harvest Foxe Basin polar bears, and then we have one less tag because of that self-defense kill. Could the minister provide an outline as to how that works? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. The member is correct. With self-defense kills, the closest community ends up with one less tag, and the hide is surrendered to the hunters and trappers organization. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Usually, we hear that the tag should have been removed from another community and I am of the understanding that it is taken off of the Foxe Basin population. Thank you for clarifying the procedure.

I can say that the polar bear population is not in decline. This past spring, we went to Coral Harbour by boat in open water, and we found a polar bear in the middle of the ocean. It was very fat and the elders were saying that usually, if a polar bear is in no rush swimming, then a seal might come up thinking it is a piece of ice or an iceberg and approach it. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all.

Chairman: That was just a comment. Thank you. The next name on my list: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you. I usually don't have questions on this, but the hunters and trappers organization is listed at \$438,000 and it seems to get spent quickly every year. I would like to ask how this number is determined, and is that amount is adequate? Also, do the hunters and trappers organizations all get the same amount? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The hunters and trappers organizations receive their funding from the Government of Canada. This money is for the regional wildlife boards. The HTOs are funded through the Nunavut Secretariat, and those funds do not come from us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you. Maybe I didn't explain myself well enough. I was talking about the HTOs. It says \$438,000. Do all 25 HTOs get the same amount, or do some communities get a larger amount or a smaller amount? That is my question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Yes. Thank you for clarifying your question. It depends on the size of the community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Wildlife Research (interpretation) on page 186 in the business plan says "...analysis of Inuit knowledge and Inuit Societal Values research.", along with scientific research, and it made me wonder who trumps, because sometimes the scientific research and the traditional Inuit knowledge can be different in respect to wildlife, what is happening to the wildlife and stuff.

So I'm trying to figure out how the department comes to a decision based upon perhaps conflicting information that may be coming in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all of our research projects, we use both scientific information and data and *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, and all that information-data, is on the recommendation to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and they look at both sides of it, and then the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board would make a recommendation if it is to do with total allowable harvest on certain animals. Then we would look at the recommendation that was given to and either agree to it, or send it back to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board if we don't agree with it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: I'm just not really familiar this area. I would just like to find out a little bit more about your comment, that if you didn't agree with it, you send it back. If they come back again with the same analysis, what happens then? Is there another level that this agreement would go to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the member's information, most of the time the recommendation that comes from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to the Environment minister is agreed to, but when it is not, then it goes back to Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and they can either resubmit what they recommended, or a different number and the minister will have the final say. For example, let's say it's a total allowable harvest, the minister will have the final say on what it can be.

We can go with their decision, we can vary their decision, or we can just make our own decision, but we work with them and 9 times out of 10, it is the recommendation that is given to the minister from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board that becomes the total allowable harvest. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. That is very interesting to me. Just out of curiosity; we all know what is happening in this area in the South Baffin with regard to caribou, and the

restrictions that have placed upon the people that live here. I wonder: was that a wildlife decision or was that a ministerial decision? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every decision is made by the minister, but the total allowable harvest of 250 was a recommendation that came from Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you for that information. I want to go to 188 of the business plan. It talks about “Reduce the number of residential oil spills in the Territory.”

I know at one point a few summers ago that was quite a thing here in our City of Iqaluit. We had quite a few leaking oil tanks. In fact, we were spared that by a summer employment student that worked for your department that actually noticed that our tank was starting to drip and we were able to assess it and get fixed right away.

Is this kind of work happening all throughout Nunavut, and are we finding that there are a lot fewer spills now than there were perhaps earlier on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is ongoing, and it is a courtesy service that we provide at no charge to homeowners.

In the outlying communities, most of the fuel tanks are in public housing, which is the majority of the houses, and I know that at least in Arviat, but I think they are doing other communities, they have been doing a lot of fuel tank switching, or putting new fuel tanks because fuel tanks have a set life. This is ongoing but I believe that we have fewer and fewer spills these days because people are more aware now that fuel tanks don't last forever. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Just on the same page of the business plan, it says it conducts “...investigation and monitoring of contaminated sites...” and I'm wondering if all the contaminated sites are known throughout Nunavut. Do you know every single contaminated site, or is the department perhaps coming across contaminated sites that they didn't exist? What is the status of this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we know most sites, but I would naïve if it is said we know all sites. There could be sites that we don't know about

and if there are any sites that are found and reported, then we deal with the issue, but most of these are old legacy sites that we know of and they have been inventoried. I would say that there may be some sites that we are not aware of, and if anyone knows of any sites that they are concerned with, please report it through your conservation officer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I'm just curious to know what makes a site? Is it two barrels, 15 barrels, 100 barrels? What makes this a contaminated site? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It depends on what is there. If you have 15 empty barrels, and there is nothing in the barrels, it may not be a contaminated site. It could be an ugly site, but it may not be contaminated. You could have others where you have just a few barrels but they have bad substance in them, be it oil or any other substance that could be bad to the environment, so there are no set rules. If there is a site, then it is assessed and the risk assessment is done on what the contents of the barrels, or whatever might be there. It is not just barrels, but it could be whatever substance is in the location that may harm the environment or the animals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Once the department is notified of a contaminated site, you say you do the paperwork on it, but what about the cleanup of it? Are all contaminated sites just noted where they are and what kind of contaminants it contains, but what more is done other than that? If the department does clean-up sites either using third party agreements or that, how many contaminated sites are currently being assessed and geared to be cleaned up? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department does not clean up environmental contaminated sites. We note them, then try to find out who is responsible, but we have a policy here that the polluter pays, and sometimes it is not easy to figure out who the polluter is. There are a lot of legacy sites where we are in negotiations with the federal government on certain sites that may be theirs that have to be cleaned up. There are other old sites that they try to find out who cleaned it.

Let's say it is an exploration company. That company may not be in existence anymore. It's complicated. That is why we note them and we see what the contaminants are, but the Department of Environment is not responsible for the cleanup. We are responsible for the policing. It depends on whose land it is, whether it is Crown land or Inuit-owned land

when it comes to who takes the lead in dealing with the contaminated site; or municipal lands. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That sounds kind of complicated. It just makes me think about responsibility, and if the department identifies who the right entity is to do the cleanup and then they don't want to do it, what kind of clout does the department have? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would have some legislation that would, if we could deem who is responsible, and we have clout. We can do clean-up orders. I'll take Mr. Main's example for a legacy contaminated site in Whale Cove that the member has brought up many times.

We are working with the Northwest Territories because it is legacy. It is from the power corporation that was there when we were the Northwest Territories. So this power corporation is not responsible. It is complicated, but we do have the clout for a cleanup order if we can prove who caused it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: That is it for me. Sorry. Is Parks part of it? Okay, Parks. I think I had one question. On 192 of your business plans, it talks about Heritage Appreciation Plans and one of them is for Sylvia Grinnell/Qaummaarviit.

I am just wondering the status of those, where we are at, and what it all means. I know that Qaummaarviit is a pretty active place in the summer time, where people want to go see history there, but what has been done at the Sylvia Grinnell River with regards to the Heritage Appreciation Plans?

My other question is the Iqalugaarjuup Nunangat; is that the Iqalugaarjuup here, down the bay, or somewhere else? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Each territorial park has a joint management committee and same with the Sylvia Grinnell River here. They have a joint management committee and they come up with a plan on how they want to manage and run the park, and they are working on that right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name on my list: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is mentioned in the opening comments, as page Mar-2, as the wording used in the business plan, where the third item in English says Environment Science. I have a question on this as it touches upon part of it, and my colleague also mentioned it earlier, but related to lands that are polluted or requiring cleanup.

The reason why I am asking about that is because some of the animals we harvest, especially the terrestrial species who travel on the land, and they eat the vegetation and I was thinking of the reasoning for requesting more funding for these types of projects. I wanted to be clearer on it, so does the federal government or third parties fund these projects, so I am asking if any assistance is provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps he can rephrase his question? I didn't really understand the question myself as I would prefer to respond properly to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq, please clarify your question. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question relates to polar bears specifically, because they are an iconic species for many global residents. As the ice starts to melt and recede in parts of the Arctic regions, if the ice recedes, polar bears will lose their habitats.

The reason why I am asking the question relates to the fact that many false advertisements are played on television and internet videos, and that polar bears will start to decline profusely and they say due to loss of habitat, polar bears will run out of space.

The reason why I am asking about that, is whether we can present actual facts that can identify whether polar bears will be threatened or not and if their populations are suffering extreme population decreases? That is what I would like to clarify. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to respond as I believe I now understand the question. Yes, those ads are produced by many global groups who pay for these ads on television, stating their theories that polar bears are starving, populations crashing, that polar bears will die out without sea ice.

However, we as the Department of the Environment have presented the truth at every meeting internationally, especially at polar bear management meetings where we present our population study results for the various units, and that overall the population is holding steady.

There was a period of ten years where the population, and here I will use this example, during the ten years, if the polar bears had 1,000 overall numbers, it would be like

nothing had changed, as the population held steady. Then we would use that equation to state that the populations are not decreasing as most units have remained steady.

As well, how can I say this in the best way? Our department has maintained our position to the outside world, as well as to other jurisdictions within Canada, that our bears are managed very conservatively. We are managing them effectively, and the amount of harvested polar bears is also reviewed carefully to ensure that we don't kill as many as are recruited.

We also recommend that due to our effective management, the majority of the populations are holding steady, and we continue to portray that information both within Canada and internationally. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's ability to answer very succinctly and clearly. To move to another issue, I wanted to follow up on my colleague's earlier question. Now it relates to the territorial parks.

I am talking about territorial parks that are either in or close to a community but I personally don't know if these parks can be used by hunters to harvest animals or are they barred? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All territorial parks within Nunavut are covered by an overall IIBA agreement, where Inuit and the department have come to an agreement on the uses allowed in territorial parks within Nunavut, and harvesting is allowed, and they can also harvest in the federal parks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 189 Environmental Protection, my question is when we were listening to MLA Pat Angnakak on the environmental protection it tells me that the Environmental Protection Act is enforced by your department and it manage the contaminated sites inventory for the GN. So my question is have you done investigations and monitoring of contaminated sites by Baffinland? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have jurisdiction over that area; it's on QIA lands with the Baffinland mine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response, but it tells me that you “Work with stakeholders...” and negotiate on management of “...spill investigations and carrying out enforcement actions as necessary.” Has it come to that level or am I missing something in reading this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if I explain to the member a little bit on spills; it depends. If there is a spill or a contaminated site, it depends on where it is. If it's on federal Crown land, then the federal government is responsible. If it's in the ocean, then Fisheries and Oceans, I believe, is responsible. It's the feds that are responsible. For our department, we're responsible if it's on Commissioner's Land. It depends where the spill happens is who takes the lead and who is responsible. If we are the only ones there, we will react to it to try to stop the spill if it's ongoing, but it depends where the spill occurs is who is responsible for the enforcement and containing the spill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: I just have a couple of more questions, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for recognizing me. Your proposed '20-21 main estimates have \$100,000 for the Disaster Compensation Program. However, your department only spent \$42,000. How come it's so low? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That program is application based, so if there are lots of disasters in a year, then we use the total amount of funds. If there is less, then we use less. It is application based. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question on page 187 of the business plan, it tells me that you're initiating “Muskox Management Unit MX-11 survey.” I know there's an increase of muskox in the Kivalliq area to the point like if you feel you see a big rock and it starts moving, that's a muskox...

>> *Laughter*

...and they are in competition with caribou. What's the situation in this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do many different wildlife population surveys to get an estimate on their population and we also do that for muskox

because there's a total allowable harvest on muskox, so we want to make sure that the total allowable harvest is as accurate as can be.

If the muskox population is getting too high, then normally we would put a recommendation in to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to increase the total allowable harvest so that the muskox numbers can be managed. If they're fewer because they may be moving or for whatever reason, then the total allowable harvest could be down, but generally with muskox, I think the muskox population in the Kivalliq is doing very well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on Program Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$18,829,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page I-3. Environment. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$24,709,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded the review of the Department of Environment?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Closing comments, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the members for asking pointed questions and to justify our budget, and I'm always happy when they agree to it, that it shows that we're going in the right direction.

I would also like to thank all the staff that have made it with all the information they gave me so that I can give the answers that the members need. I thank my staff that is right here right now with me.

In closing here, I would like to just thank Steve Pinksen here, the Assistant Deputy Minister. This is our last time he will be at COW. Mr. Steve Pinksen is retiring next month. We should all thank him for his long service here that he has dedicated.

He started off as, I believe, a summer student. His first posting was in Pangnirtung and part of his job was to go to the campsites and take all the garbage back. Since he did that on his own, it was expected that all the officers would have to do that too. He started a trend.

He has been instrumental in our department ever since Nunavut has been here, and I truly thank him for the dedication and the commitment that he has had to the department and

Nunavut. I wish him well in his retirement and I told him this morning that his last day is on April 16. When he wakes up on April 17, I think he will be lost and confused for a while.

>> *Laughter*

I thank you, Steve, and I thank everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Thanks to your staff and happy retirement to Mr. Pinksen next month. Sergeant-at-Arms, please excuse the witnesses. We will take a few minutes to set up for the next department, which is EIA. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 11:21 and resumed at 11:23*

Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good morning. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. We're going to move on to the next department, which is the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. I will start by asking Minister Savikataaq: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree for the witnesses to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. For the record, Minister Savikataaq, if you could please introduce your officials and continue on into your opening comments. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Bill MacKay, the DM of EIA, Deputy Minister, and to my right is Ariel Atienza. He's the director of corporate services.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to present the 2021-22 Main Estimates and the 2021-22 Business Plan for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, EIA provides overall management and support to the Premier and cabinet in order to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of our government. Accordingly

Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs leads the coordination of policy and legislative development with the Government of Nunavut departments and agencies to ensure that *Turaaqtavut* is effectively implemented.

EIA also ensures the government's priorities and interests are represented and promoted at national and international levels.

Mr. Chairman, the department's current main estimates for the 2021-22 fiscal year total \$21,330,000. The breakdown of this budget allows for \$16,235,000 allocated for salaries and benefits, \$235,000 for grants and contributions, and \$4.86 million for departmental operations and maintenance. This amount also includes the \$2,266,000 allocated for EIA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs will have a total 115 PYs in 2021-22, which is up from 106 last year. 19 of these positions are dedicated staff for cabinet and the Commissioner of Nunavut. There are also nine new term positions created to assist in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to arrange the strategic and logistical response command team on behalf of the whole government.

I note that other departments that have also pursued strategic in enhancing the government's response to the pandemic, that are specific to their service and program delivery expertise.

Mr. Chairman, EIA has four lines of core business: Directorate, Strategic Planning, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Devolution.

1. The Directorate Branch provides overall management and coordination of activities for the executive branch of government, as well as broad communications advice and support across government. It also supports and coordinates the whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The Strategic Planning Branch provides comprehensive policy advice on priorities, strategies, policies, and legislation to the Premier and all of cabinet. The branch also participates in the collection of statistical data and ensures availability of current and accurate statistical information about Nunavut. Additionally, the branch provides advisory services regarding access to information and privacy protection issues.
3. The Intergovernmental Affairs Branch lead the management and development of strategies, policies and initiatives relating to international, federal, provincial, and territorial relations. It liaises with indigenous and circumpolar organizations, and also provides support to each of the Nunavut's communities via the government liaison officers network.
4. Finally, the Devolution Secretariat is responsible for the devolution process to transfer control over Crown lands and resources to the Government of Nunavut.

It is worth noting that over this past year, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs reviewed its organizational structure, looking for ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

The focus of the review was to identify ways to improve overall management and coordination of the activities and responsibilities of the executive branch of the government. It also served to help identify which divisions may be inadequately resourced or which could be realigned to better deliver and meet the department's mandate, priorities, and obligations.

In October 2020, cabinet approved the reorganization of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs which included the creation of a new position; assistant deputy minister of strategic management, as well as the relocation of three vacant positions from Pangnirtung to Iqaluit, and oversight for the ATIPP function moving to the Strategic Planning Division.

This reorganization allows:

- Increased capacity within the Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and Indigenous Affairs divisions;
- Strengthened coordination of certain core departmental functions; and
- Streamlines reporting relationships within the department.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present EIA's main estimates and business plan.

I welcome comments from my fellow members, and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Does the Chair of the standing committee having opening comments? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would look to point out that John Main is the actual chair. John Main, we are missing you. I am the co-chair, otherwise I would not be presenting these opening comments.

I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2021-22 main estimates and 2021-24 business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. The department's proposed 2021-22 operations and maintenance budget is \$21,330,000. This represents an 11.9 percent increase from the 2020-21 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is increasing from 106 to 115 PYs.

The proposed 2021-22 main estimates of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs reflects the proposed creation of a new COVID-19 Secretariat during the 2021-22 fiscal year, the proposed creation of a new Cabinet Registrar Division

during the 2021-22 fiscal year, and the proposed elimination of the Evaluation Division during the 2021-22 fiscal year. The proposed 2021-2022 budget for the COVID-19 Secretariat is \$1,888,000. (interpretation ends) Although the standing committee recognizes the government's rationale for creating a new COVID-19 Secretariat to co-ordinate its response to the pandemic, it emphasizes the importance of avoiding duplication of effort between different departments.

Section 8 of the territorial *Statistics Act* requires that the annual report of the Bureau of Statistics be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The 2018-19 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2019. The 2019-2020 annual report has not yet been tabled. The standing committee notes the continued high vacancy rate in the department's decentralized Pangnirtung office.

The department's 2020-23 business plan indicated that the Bureau of Statistics completed a survey on "child care services and facilities in Nunavut" in March of 2019. The standing committee looks forward to the results of the survey being tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The department's 2020-23 business plan also indicated that one of the priorities of the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics was to "collaborate with Statistics Canada and Community and Government Services to undertake the Canada Core Public Infrastructure Survey to identify available assets and infrastructural facilities, their existing worth and state of use or disrepair in all Nunavut communities." However, the department's 2021-24 business plan indicates that "this priority is currently delayed." The standing committee continues to look forward to the release of these findings.

The department's 2020-23 business plan also indicated that one of the priorities of the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics was to "Liaise with Nunavut Poverty Reduction Secretariat and use the Market-Based Measure approach to assess levels of poverty in the territory." In September 2020 the Government of Nunavut issued a request for proposals for a feasibility study for a guaranteed basic income for Nunavut. The standing committee encourages appropriate collaboration on this initiative.

On January 21, 2020 the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced the signing of the new Katujjigatigiinniq Protocol. The protocol commits both parties to entering into a new "Information-Sharing Agreement" and a new "Article 32 Policy." The standing committee looks forward to these being tabled in the Legislative Assembly in a timely manner. The Katujjigatigiinniq Protocol states that the Nunavut Implementation Panel "...has an important role to play in the day-to-day implementation of the *Nunavut Agreement*." The department's 2021-24 business plan indicates that it "leads participation in Nunavut Implementation Panel meetings." (interpretation) The Nunavut Implementation Panel's 2012-13 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 5, 2019. (interpretation ends) Given the infrequency with which the panel produces annual reports, the standing committee continues to encourage the minister to provide periodic updates to the Legislative Assembly on its activities and initiatives.

On August 15, 2019 the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced the signing of a devolution agreement in principle. The announcement indicated that "...the next step is a Final Agreement, which is expected within five years." The standing committee continues to urge the government to publicly clarify the number of federal positions that are envisioned to be transferred to the territorial public service as part of the devolution process.

(interpretation) The standing committee also continues to urge the government to provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly on the status of transboundary issues with neighbouring jurisdictions.

(interpretation ends) That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and 2021-24 Business Plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. *Nakurmiik*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. I will now open up the floor for any general comments to the department. Are there any general comments? Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

In your opening comments, there are references to several issues. However, what I do not see here is any reference to Inuit societal values, culture or *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and without any reference to these issues; I am of the mind that we may need to decide our course of action.

Here it speaks about aboriginal people in the opening comments, on page 4, and this spoke to the need to work together with indigenous people and although it is mentioned briefly. I was thinking of the fact that the government holds the ultimate responsibility, and that departments work to try and accomplish the various mandates they have been provided, so although it may be the highest level territorially, since it is within Nunavut itself, our government is limited to that, and I thought it would have been mentioned as I felt it should be included.

Now, I am confused as to how this will now be dealt with, but I just wanted to mention my concerns there. I don't have any other comments at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. General comments. If not, we'll move onto page by page. Before I start, I guess I should say; there are six pages to this department, and I'm going to ask members to keep your preamble short and be precise with your questions so that we can get through these pages in a timely manner. We are going to start on page B-4 for Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, under Directorate. Are there any questions? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department proposed 2021-22 includes \$1.88 million in funding for the creation of a new COVID-19 Secretariat. How was this amount determined? Final question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amount was calculated by the number of PY's and the O&M budget that would go with it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Premier can explain who is on the COVID-19 Secretariat. What are the positions within there, and what the reporting structure is like? I am assuming they report directly to the Premier or whether it goes through a deputy minister? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had that information on a small piece of paper for a Standing Committee earlier. The associate deputy minister would report to the deputy minister and the other staff would report to the associate deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So, the COVID-19 Secretariat, in terms of their activities, where would those activities be reported on? From where regular MLAs sit, where would we see a summary of what the secretariat has achieved, initiatives that they have worked on? It's hard to understand the work that's being done, being on the outside. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I begin, we proposed this COVID Secretariat. It's not on a permanent basis, we've requested that it be until 2023. But it may not be until 2023 this COVID Secretariat, that's within EIA, it would be there as long as it's needed. If they are not needed anymore next year, then that budget would be gone.

Mr. Chairman, the reason we have this here is...when COVID started, everybody had to do their job plus the other related duties to do with COVID. We created this secretariat in Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs so that we can have an overall government approach in a coordinated response to COVID within the territories.

Health has their own COVID division, and they're dealing with any health-related issues to do with COVID. This secretariat is to deal with the COVID issue so that we have a

common attack on COVID because there are many fronts that are non-health. For example, there are the airlines, the isolation hubs, the economic factors that were impacted, and so this secretariat was to have a coordinated approach so that people were doing two jobs can go back to doing just their one job. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Page 4 mentions the COVID Communications Group. I wonder if the Premier can explain who sits on the COVID Communications Group. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The director of communications from EIA and the director communications from Health. We want to make sure that what we communicate to Nunavummiut is done in a timely manner, in an accurate manner, with no mixed-messaging, and with the simplest, easiest facts that Nunavummiut can understand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Premier.

I think an example of mixed messaging... I'll give you an example here; on the one hand, Nunavummiut are being advised to avoid non-essential travel. On the other hand, the government is telling residents that we will pay all of the costs of your isolation, which stands in contrast to Northwest Territories.

When it comes to this COVID Secretariat, the idea of having non-essential travellers pay part of their isolation; is that something that would fall under this COVID Secretariat, or is that under the Department of Health, or is it under Community and Government Services because it is isolation hubs? Maybe on that specific idea. I'm just trying to understand where the accountability or the decision lies. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That decision on that would have been a cabinet decision in terms of whether people doing isolation in the south pay, or whether the government pays. That was a cabinet decision.

Mr. Chairman, if I can explain, the circumstances between the Northwest Territories and ourselves are quite different. In the Northwest Territories, they are isolating within the territory. Here, since it is not feasible for all Nunavummiut to do that, to isolate within the territory. At the time that we opened up isolation hubs, we had to have it in the south due to overcrowding and other circumstances. It would be hard to do a proper self-

isolation within Nunavut, and that is why the hubs were opened at the time to make sure that we can protect Nunavummiut from COVID-19. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think I'm almost done on this page. I would like to maybe highlight an issue with regard to the public health orders.

The communications of the public health orders themselves has not been, I'll say; accessible. I have received questions from constituents "What are the new rules for the public health orders." I look on the available resources. There are no summaries, there is no plain language guide to the public health orders. There are only the public health orders themselves.

I have printed off the most recent one, and it's about 10 pages and it is quite hard to decipher. I guess my question is on the communications piece, with COVID-19 and the public health orders, has there been consideration given to doing a plain language guide, or a one-page summary of the public health orders, and I'm asking about written communications?

I know that the CPHO has done radio shows and whatnot, but it is very hard for people to track down what the new rules are, other than going through the public health orders themselves. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do all that information on the government webpage and we have a question and answer on there; typical questions and answers. Mr. Chairman, every time there is a change in public health orders, I do go on the radio and on TV, when there is a change with Dr. Patterson and with the Health minister.

We usually state it in plain language what the differences are; what the new orders are. I know the member is asking for print, but I believe that vocal, like going on the radio is important too. A lot of our elders listen to the radio and that is the best way, I believe, to get to the elders on the local radio shows. We do do that, and I do that, whenever there is a change in public health orders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Also on page 4 it mentions the COVID-19 Related Actions. It says ongoing coordination of the government's "...response to COVID-19 including implementation and enforcement of orders issued pursuant to the *Public Health Act*...". So looking at the whole government,

what has been the government's approach to enforcement of the public health orders? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have done a lot of coaxing to ask people and remind people that the public health orders are there for their protection, for Nunavummiut's protection. Most of the enforcement has been in educating Nunavummiut to follow the COVID public health orders.

I know there has been some enforcement action. The only ones I know of were here in Iqaluit. It has been more of an educational campaign for Arviat mostly, because that is where COVID has been lingering on the longest. Like I just said, it has been mostly educational. There have been no legal actions taken against any individual as far as I know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier. That is a big question mark, coming from members in this community, or some constituents anyway. It was a bit of a debate within the community whether or not enforcement was a good thing or a bad thing. I think that it was frustrating for some constituents who were following the rules to the letter, to see a lack of consequences for other community members who were not.

It has been shared with me from constituents that the enforcement and why there has been a lack of enforcement is a question mark. That should be my last question is: why hasn't there been any fines issued? Were there barriers to enforcing the public health orders? Were there staffing issues? Was there training on the enforcing of public health orders that was needed? I'm just trying to understand. Education, yes, but then enforcement is usually a part of the picture in most jurisdictions as well. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a debate that is probably still going on whether education and where do you draw the line and take the big stick out enforcement? Do you fine someone who is breaking the public health orders and they have no money and can't pay? If they're in overcrowded houses, then what do you do? It's not an easy solution, but Dr. Patterson's advice was that education of Nunavummiut was the best way to go and encourage people to comply. We want people to comply.

I know the hamlet there did the emergency order there where they had a curfew for 14 days, and I believe they had the bylaw enforcing that. I commend the hamlet for taking actions. The hamlet in Arviat has come above and beyond their responsibilities in helping out with the COVID-19 response and to helping the Arviarmiut to get through this crisis and it is a crisis there. They have been locked down now for almost 120 days. That's a very long time. I don't have to tell anyone that.

Mr. Main, you would know that better than anyone else sitting in this room what that feels like. We can imagine it, but you know it. I just want the Arviarmiut to be patient. We are going to get to the end and Arviarmiut, if you're listening, please get the vaccine if you have not been vaccinated yet. That is our best defence against beating the COVID-19 virus, following public health orders and getting vaccinated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Premier mentioned Dr. Patterson preferring or mentioning that education was preferable. Were there directives issued? Were there decisions made in terms of enforcement or what the approach would be with enforcement under this COVID secretariat, or is it simply a case that it's up to each and every RCMP officer what to enforce and what not to enforce? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was no directive from Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs on what to enforce and what not to enforce on public health orders because all public health orders are there to be adhered to. If there were any complaints made, most of the complaints would have been made to the RCMP and the RCMP would respond accordingly, but for enforcement, the bylaw officers and the wildlife officers are also there to do enforcement. To the best of my knowledge, the RCMP and the bylaw officers have been doing their patrols. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have any further questions. I'll just reiterate that it remains a question mark as to why there hasn't been much enforcement in terms of legal action or fines. I think it's important to understand it, especially if other communities in Nunavut end up having outbreaks. I hope they don't, but it's important to understand. It's just a comment. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for your comment, Mr. Main. Before we move on, we will break for lunch and return here at 1:30. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 11:59 and resumed at 13:29

Chairman: Good afternoon, members. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. When we left off this morning, we were dealing with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and we were on page B-4 under Directorate and I still had a couple of names for questions. Next on the list is Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm so full I was forgetting the question I was going to ask, but I remember it now. Thank you. The secretariat that the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs established that I support and assuming that COVID-19 is gone, then this secretariat would be dissolved. The one question I have is: will it be dissolved when there is no more coronavirus in Nunavut or across Canada? That's my question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we don't need to deal with the coronavirus, perhaps if it lingers on or rather I should say that when there is no more COVID-19 around, this secretariat would dissolve and when things come back to normal, when we don't need to worry about COVID-19 anymore, the secretariat would be dissolved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you. I understand that, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. (interpretation) In reading news reports from around the world, they are saying that the coronavirus is subsiding and it's becoming more hopeful. It's still not passed yet, but it is becoming more hopeful. It's just a comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for your comments. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, folks. On page 2 of your business plan the Utility Rates Review Council for the current fiscal year, 2020-21, you've got \$427,000, but the following years it's much lower to \$341,000. Can you explain why the current year is much higher? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The decrease is a decrease in compensation and benefits and a decrease in travel and transportation just based on past expenditures, a decrease in purchased services, and a decrease in contracts. There will be [fewer] workers. If you have [fewer] workers, less will be done, but we will still get chores or services provided that need to be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier. Mr. Premier, your department's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates on page 16 that two out of four executive-level positions were filled by Nunavut Inuit employees as of September 30, 2020. The draft business plan indicates that your department will have a total of five executive-level positions as of March 31, 2022. The draft business plan indicates that four out of five of these positions will be filled by Nunavut Inuit employees. Which

specific executive-level positions are planned to be filled by Nunavut Inuit employees?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To make sure the member gets the correct answer as he can, I'll have Mr. Atienza answer it, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Atienza, go ahead.

Mr. Atienza: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the new executive position, this is for the executive for the new associate deputy minister for the COVID response, so that's why we have five for March 31, 2022. Before when we had this, we had Mr. Coman. Mr. Coman is a beneficiary, so we have now existing two Inuit for as an executive. These are the newly created associate deputy minister for strategic planning and we have the associate deputy minister for COVID response, and we're expecting for the assistant deputy minister for intergovernmental affairs. That's three.

The governmental affairs, we have for the associate deputy minister for COVID and we have the assistant deputy minister for strategic management, and the other one is... .
Sorry, I have to check.

Chairman: Okay. Thank you. Minister Savikataaq, you wanted to supplement the answer? Please go ahead.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just give the *Reader's Digest* version. We hire Inuit as often as we can, as much as we can, and we have quite a few executive positions within the government now in terms of deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers and any associate ministers that we have generally are beneficiaries. I believe we have the highest number of Inuit in the executive positions than before. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on B-4. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,757,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. B-5. Strategic Planning. Are there any questions? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and officials.

My line of questioning's topic is going to be surrounding policy and planning and specifically surrounding the policy development process. I was wondering if the minister would be able to elaborate and provide some details on exactly what the policy development process is and how policy will develop within EIA or within departments and then make its way up to cabinet for request for decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. The details you're asking are quite detailed, so if the minister can summarize it the best he could. Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll summarize it. We have four main functions, I guess, in policy. We determine what action or what problem we have to tackle, and then the policy decides what to do, how we do it, and to understand what we have done. Find the problem, find the solution, and see the solution was adequate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the summary. I'm very curious about the policy development process and we're all aware how policy in general impacts every aspect of life in Nunavut, which is why I'm very curious about this topic. Policy is one issue that will make its way into the Assembly towards the end of the process. When policy is approved by cabinet is typically when the Assembly will hear about it.

When I look over to the west in the Northwest Territories specifically, in their government they have stated that it's a fundamental aspect to consensus government that standing committees and Members of the Assembly are provided with an opportunity to review proposed policy initiatives and provide advice to government in advance of cabinet decisions.

I found it very interesting how the Government of the NWT plays an active role with Members of the Legislative Assembly and standing committees in the development and review of draft policy. I would just like to ask the minister what his stance is on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever the government is going to come up with a policy, it will be one of the departments for one of their programs or services they need to do, and we have to have policy to make sure that we do anything in a uniform and systematic manner. We don't want, "Well, you're my friend, therefore you get this" or "I don't like you; you don't get that." We have to have guidelines and policies to guide us to make sure it's done properly.

Whenever we're doing policy in terms of services, we always work with our stakeholders. We do community consultations and during the community consultation process, if there is one, then the MLAs can get involved. The MLAs can talk to the ministers at any time. We have an open door policy and each department comes up with a policy and it goes to, like the member said, cabinet and then cabinet makes a decision on the policy, then it's done and I believe that's how it is.

We were elected by all the MLAs here to run the government and we're doing our job by running the government as best as we can. If a policy is not liked or the MLAs figure there are ways to fix it a bit, we're always open to talking with them to make a policy work well. A policy is there to make sure that we give the services or that things are done in a proper manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response. It's good to know that the government works with stakeholders on policy development as well as holding community consultations on policy development. It's something that I was unaware of, but looking at the consensus model and how the Government of the NWT does provide their members with an opportunity to review draft policy before cabinet makes a final decision, I was curious if the minister thinks that would be beneficial to our own Assembly and our own government in the Government of Nunavut's policy development process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have so many policies that I don't know if it would be reviewed or as the member thinks, from ongoing, but like I said, when a policy comes out, a policy can be a living document. If there are ways to make it better for Nunavummiut, then we're open to look at that. When a policy comes out, then all the MLAs can look at it and give suggestions on how this policy could better serve Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question for the minister is: given the minister is open to suggestions, would the minister consider amending the current policy development process to incorporate the Members of the Legislative Assembly to review and provide recommendations or suggestions before the policy is then approved by cabinet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would have to think about that quite a bit. We want the process to be efficient and done in a timely manner. I'm not saying no to it, but I would have to think long and hard about it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Page 6 mentions the updated policy development process and this is regarding incorporating "feedback from Tuttarviit and the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit within legislation and policy." The update says "It is anticipated that the updated policy development

process will be complete by the end of the fiscal year.” What are the changes that will be put in place under this new policy development process? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It should be and this is where the Inuit societal values are incorporated into any proposals or any requests for decisions that come before cabinet and any programs that we have or policies that Inuit societal values are always a part of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) This new process should be improving the policies that are developed, so we will see more reflections of Inuit societal values, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* within policy. What is Nunavut Tunngavik’s involvement in the new development process? It is mentioned specifically in the status update. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just didn’t get the last part of who is involved. If the member can just repeat that, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The status update says “This initiative was delayed pending finalization of the Article 32 Policy which is being developed with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.” Does the new policy development process give Nunavut Tunngavik a role in the policy development and, if so, what is it? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Katujjigatigiinniq Protocol was signed by me and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated President Ms. Kotierk. We work with them with anything that would affect Inuit, which is most of Nunavut, and we also signed an information-sharing agreement where we share information with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and they share with us. It’s all part of the process here that we have gone through and we’ve had many protocols to it. This is just the latest updated version of our Article 32 protocol. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I still don’t understand what Nunavut Tunngavik’s role will be in the policy development process, but I’ll move on.

Just at the very bottom of page 6, I'm disappointed to see that the work on assessing levels of poverty in Nunavut has been delayed. I was looking at the following year's priorities and I don't see any mention of that assessment of poverty within Nunavut. If the Premier could explain: has this been delayed or cancelled? It appears that it has been cancelled. It doesn't show up anywhere in the following fiscal years. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has just been delayed due to COVID; it has not been cancelled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) When will the priority be addressed? It doesn't appear in the priorities for this year. Was it just omitted from the business plan, and I guess the work will happen this fiscal year? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will be commencing and starting it again. It's not mentioned there, but as soon as we can, like I told the member there, it was delayed due to COVID. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have three questions; the first one is with regard to three positions in your Evaluation Division. This year, 2020-21, included \$243,000 in funding for the operations. However, your department's proposed 2021-22 estimates indicate that the division will be eliminated during the '21-22 fiscal year. Why is the division being eliminated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't understand. We're moving positions, but we're not eliminating; we're re-profiling positions, if that's what the member is asking about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: All right. Your department's '20-21 main estimates include \$243,000 in funding for the operation of three positions in its Evaluation Division. However, your department's proposed '21-22 main estimates indicate that the division will be eliminated during the '21-22 fiscal year. Why is the division being eliminated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the best of my knowledge, we're not eliminating a division. If we're talking on the same lines here, we're taking three positions that were in Pangnirtung and we're re-profiling them here in Iqaluit. The money would go from one area to another area, but we're not getting rid of a division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In speaking of Pangnirtung, the Government of Nunavut's current quarterly employment report indicates that 10 of your department's positions are located in the community of Pangnirtung, if we're talking about the same thing; I think we are. However, the report indicates that seven out of ten positions were vacant as of September 30, 2020. Why the vacancy rate and what actions are being taken to address it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of the problem was that we didn't have a director of that division for a while in Pangnirtung and some of the positions have certain skills that they need to fill them. I believe we have a director now, so we're hoping that those positions could start being filled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question and it's with regard to the 2020 business plan that the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics worked with Statistics Canada and other organizations to conduct a survey on child care to examine the demand for and use of child care services and facilities in Nunavut, such as Chesterfield Inlet. It indicates that the survey was completed in March of last year, 2019...no, two years ago. When will the results of the survey be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Final question.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not a requirement to table them, but as soon as we can do it, then they will be tabled, but it is not a requirement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page seven of the business plan, the priorities for 2021-22, the first bullet says "Work with Nunavut organizations and Statistical Bureaus in the three territories to improve the Northern Data Strategy to ensure surveys are undertaken in accordance with indigenous cultures and societal values."

Could the minister elaborate a little bit on what that survey is about? (interpretation)
Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work with the other governments to make sure that the data is easily understandable and make sure it is consistent, so that you can compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges, instead of apples to oranges. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In our case it would be polar bear meat and walrus meat.

Under the priorities for 2022-23, it's also the third bullet, under the second last bullet on page 7. It says "Collaborate with Employment and Social Development Canada, Statistics Canada...", which I believe in Inuktitut is *Kiglisiniaqtiit Kanataku Gavamatuqakkut*. (interpretation) They are the ones that travel into the communities to conduct surveys.

(interpretation ends) Some of these people make phone calls, and when they call our unilingual people, are they all from Statistics Canada, or are they just some people that should not be entertained with? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions, a lot of these statistical data is done by phone now, and what that line entails are, whether it's a person going door to door physically, before COVID-19, and hopefully will start again, or a phone, we want to make sure that the person doing the collecting of the data or doing the survey has an Inuktitut-speaking person with them, so that the data can be correct and accurate.

The comment about whether it is a genuine person doing the survey or not; I can't answer that, but that would be up to the person receiving the phone call. So if you are not sure, ask questions, and if you are still not sure, you can just hang up the phone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Thank you. (interpretation) A constituent of mine was called and I just told her "If you don't understand, you can just hang up the phone." The Statistics Canada people always visited before COVID-19, and we usually saw them in our communities. They are usually alone when they come and they interview without an interpreter.

This seems to state that the Government of Nunavut will work with Statistics Canada of the federal government. If COVID-19 ends and Government of Nunavut employees go to our community, will they be accompanied by an Inuktitut speaking person? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once they start coming back to Nunavut, we will work them and they will have an Inuktitut-speaking person, but to my knowledge a government employee wouldn't be going with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, when Statistics Canada wants to go to communities like Sanikiluaq, Kimmirut or Kinngait, do they notify EIA before going into the communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, they don't tell EIA before they come up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the federal government notifies the Nunavut Statistics Bureau to work together whenever they are doing statistics or surveys of Inuit, it would be beneficial. A lot of money from the federal government is gained from these surveys, and I know we can get more funding because there are so many Inuit here that do not end up participating or being counted. It would be really good if the federal statistics would notify Nunavut and keep us informed so that the communities will know if they're going to be visited, and when they're going to be visited. Perhaps that money we get from the federal government could increase because I believe many people are passed or not counted and the money that we get from the federal government is based on the number of people. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Statistics Canada does a count every five years in Canada. I know that when they come to Nunavut, they don't notify us on what date they will be going to a particular community. We would like to work with them when they are visiting Inuit again, and we want to make sure that they have an able Inuktitut-speaking person going along with them. I agree with that. I agree with what my colleague is saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page B-5 Strategic Planning Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted \$3,126,000 agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. B-6 Nunavut Cabinet. Are there any questions? If not, B-6 Nunavut Cabinet Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted \$4,401,000 agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. B-7 Commissioner of Nunavut. Any questions? Seeing none. Commissioner of Nunavut Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted \$327,000 agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page B-8 Intergovernmental Affairs. Any questions? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Page 9 of the business plan mentions the memorandum of understanding with the Province of Manitoba. So, in terms of that relationship and that MOU in particular; what's been achieved under that agreement with Manitoba? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Winnipeg Art Gallery is a part of the opening that they have there, with all of the Inuit carvings and art that is there. That is part of the MOU. In the Kivalliq, almost all of our health services are done in Manitoba; mostly in Winnipeg, and it is just so that we have open communications with the Government of Manitoba.

We have several MOUs with other governments too, but the one that the member is asking about with the Manitoba Government, we see that as a beneficial thing to have a memorandum of understanding with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier. (interpretation ends) Hopefully in the future it will include things like a hydro link between the Kivalliq and Manitoba, as well as maybe a transportation corridor. I know those are a ways off.

It also mentions on the same page the Dene overlap agreements in Nunavut; negotiation of Dene overlap agreements. I wonder if the Premier could give a brief update on where those overlap agreement negotiations are at. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Denesuline land claims have been halted for about a year now. The federal government has ceased all negotiations with them, so we have no updates at all. It is status quo from what it was a year ago. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So that is the Dene overlap agreement. Are there other groups further west that were also working with on negotiations and agreements? I can't recall the exact name of them... the Athabasca Denesuline. Is that the same status, or what is the update on that one? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is all encompassed in one claim with us, and all of that has been halted. There are no negotiations going on right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier. (interpretation ends) On page 11, on the third bullet, the status update mentions "...there has been a steep uptick in calls and regular collaboration on all orders of government. It has especially been important to ensure Nunavut has a strong position on healthcare and northern priorities during this time." This is regarding COVID, I guess.

What were the other northern priorities that Nunavut has had a position on? I'm interested in housing. I'm just trying to understand what the other northern priorities are besides healthcare. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of these calls have been COVID-related, to make sure our voice is heard. All 13 Premiers would have a call first, and then all 13 of us would have a call with the Prime Minister. Most of it is COVID-19 related.

Other issues that I have been on-call about, other priorities would be the Arctic Northern Policy Framework, which was just approved by the federal government just before the last election.

I'm hoping this will be a mechanism for us to get more infrastructure within Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When it comes to giving priority access to Nunavummiut for vaccination, was this something that was coordinated through these types of calls? I should say that I am very proud of the Premier and Health Minister Kusugak, and former Minister Hickes for helping to secure access to vaccines. It is very rare that we are at the front of the line for anything in Canada and really appreciate the work on that file. So if the Premier could be maybe summarize involvement on that subject. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course we were pushing to get our share of the vaccine. Any programs that the federal government is putting out my position and I know our ministers' position always is per capita does not work whether its funding or vaccines and we have pushed that or otherwise we would be at the bottom of the list all of the time and if we want to thank anybody for Nunavut being prioritize it'd be the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and the Canadian Government made it a priority to vaccinate Indigenous and remote communities first and I am very thankful that they come up with that decision and that's why Nunavut has been prioritized because we are both Indigenous plus we are remote. So we crossed off the right boxes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main. He's done. Okay. Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of questions on B-8 and that's with regards to the implementation committees of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement and Eeyou Marine Region Land Claims Agreement. Are we talking about the Cree in southern Canada Ontario or Quebec that want to hunt polar bears? What is this about and in the finalization of Denesuline overlap treaties in the Kivalliq and their implementation plan and subsequent Nunavut Agreement amendments? So a reference question was submitted to the Nunavut Court of Justice on whether or not that Government of Nunavut's consent is required for Nunavut Agreement amendments and the two Dene treaties. Do we know at what stage this is at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a lot of words in there and lawyer talk. I'll give the layman's version and then I'll pass it onto the lawyer version to my right with Mr. MacKay there.

Mr. Chairman, we believe and we believe we are right that in order for the claims to be altered that we have to be a signatory for the Denesuline claim. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated believes that we do not have to be a signatory that Canada can sign on our behalf and we took that to court for a decision and the court could not hear it and if I could ask Mr. MacKay through you Mr. Chairman get the lawyer's version. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. MacKay.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question that the member asked, the Premier summarized it correctly. So that we brought a reference question as the member mentioned asking for the court's guidance on the specific question about whether an amendment to the Nunavut Agreement needs the Government of Nunavut's consent and that was to implement the Denesuline claim that amendment would be required.

The court found that because the agreement was subject to litigation that the Denesuline began in the 1990s and this was basely settlement negotiations that have lasted 20 some years. That agreement was subject to what they call litigation privilege so it couldn't be reviewed by the court and so the justice wasn't able to make a decision on that. So that's where that court case sits now.

Then just to tie off the member I think the member had mentioned the Eeyou Marine Region of Nunavik Marine Region those are separate agreements that the Government of Nunavut has entered into with those groups and they set out in great detail what rights those groups have in Nunavut with respect to principally with respect to harvesting wildlife but also land use. So those islands are all in Nunavut. Those agreements set out what rights those groups have in Nunavut with respect to those lands and wildlife. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

Mr. Chairman, please let me know if the question I want to ask is on the right page. My question is, as Nunavummiut, communities have their respective MLAs and some MLAs have three communities and some have two or one. Is there a policy here if a particular community wishes to have their own MLA? What would be the process? Can the minister elaborate on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. The Premier's department is not the department that takes care of that issue. I think you would have to bring that up with Elections Nunavut, so you will have a different opportunity to do that. Do you have a different question, Mr. Qirngnuq? You're good? Okay. Thank you. Mr. Kaernerker.

Mr. Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) *Ullukkut*, Premier. In your business plan on page 11, the second bullet, it says "Establish a process to incorporate advice of local Elders in government service delivery at the community level." Does that mean that when it comes to Inuit societal values, these elders will be used in the development of the strategy with changing the policies and government services? Can you further elaborate on that if I misunderstood with the policy development? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This can apply to many things, not just policy, but sometimes we ask for the advice of elders in a certain community because they know their community and they are respected. We want to make sure that what we want to do or going to do is okay by the community standards and we want to do it in a way that gets the advice of the elders as the best way to do something or the best way to have a policy. It's just to work with the communities and the elders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerker.

Mr. Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So it's only sometimes but not all the time. It says here on the status part, "...during protocol events and remain the backbone of community building and self reliance." You just mentioned "sometimes," but shouldn't it be all the time when it comes to our Inuit societal values? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We use Inuit societal values all the time. If we need more advice in a community, then sometimes we go to the elders and ask for their input on it, but everything that we do, the Inuit societal values are incorporated on it. An example would be like if you're putting up a house, you might ask for some advice on "Okay, there's usually a lot of snow here. Where's a good place?" But you wouldn't ask about "Okay, if we're making a three-storey building, this is what we need to do or that's what we need to do." That's what I mean by "sometimes," but the Inuit societal values are a part of our government and that is implemented in everything we do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on B-8. Intergovernmental Affairs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,325,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. B-9. Devolution Secretariat. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There's only one listed on this page and it's to "Continue efforts on the negotiations..." and then it mentions "Pending advancement of negotiations..." I guess that's the question right now is: what is the update in terms of negotiating towards a final agreement? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the member is aware, we signed the agreement in principle and from then, we're negotiating to the final agreement and negotiations are pending. When the agreement in principle was signed, it started the clock to have everything done within a five-year time span and we are still doing our best to stick within that time frame. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) How have negotiations or work on this file been affected by COVID? I know that a lot of other issues have been sidelined just because of the pandemic. I'm thinking of the federal government as well as the Government of Nunavut. What has the effect been in the current fiscal? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The travel portion of face-to-face meetings has definitely been affected, but the meetings themselves have not been affected. Either they're doing video like we are with you or by phone, which is not the same as face to face, but it is ongoing. COVID has not really delayed the timing of the final agreement, in my opinion. The negotiations are ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I agree; it is hard to have meetings over a computer. I don't know when people are throwing things at me like I do when I'm there in person, so it's tough.

I think the question I have about devolution, I have asked about it before, is that if and when the final agreement is signed, there will be a bunch of positions that come over to the Government of Nunavut from the Government of Canada, and I would hope to see some of those positions would be decentralized, i.e., what I mean by that is that the Government of Nunavut does not have to maintain a position that had been in a community just because the Government of Canada put it in that community. The Government of Nunavut could put those positions wherever the Government of Nunavut wants.

In terms of that decentralization piece or discussion, when would that happen? Would it happen after a final agreement is signed or is it something that's ongoing internally within the government? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Somebody just threw something at you, so let us know when it hits you.

>>Laughter

Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the member that not all these jobs have to go to one spot, one location, and it will be in the final agreement of where these jobs are located. My hope and, if I'm around, it would be to, as the saying goes, spread the wealth around. We don't need them all in one place. We don't need them scattered too much, but we don't need them all in one place. That is definitely being looked at, maybe putting divisions in certain communities where everything is not together and you can divvy up the divisions that we get. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) *Ma'na*, Premier. The last question that I want to ask is about this devolution agreement and resource development. I'm curious as to what the effects on the Government of Nunavut would be or will be. Looking at the agreement in principle right now as it is drafted, the final agreement will not be drastically different from the agreement in principle, I don't imagine.

Once devolution is being implemented, what will be the biggest changes in terms of how the Nunavut government handles resource development or approaches resource development? What additional responsibilities will the government have and in terms of decision-making, what will change? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The processes that are in place right now would still be the same. For example, the Nunavut Impact Review Board would still review every project that is coming into Nunavut. The difference would be that right now we have our members there and the federal government has their members there and they appoint them, and when the Nunavut Impact Review Board makes its decisions to the federal minister after devolution, it's my understanding that it would be to the territorial minister then and the territorial minister would make the final agreement.

In terms of resource royalties and stuff, we don't anticipate that changing much. Most of the known resources within Nunavut are on Inuit-owned land, but once the final agreement is signed and done, then we're going to start negotiating offshore and we believe that's where Nunavut has the most to gain. If we're going to get any royalties, it will be from the offshore development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main, do you have any more questions? You're good? Okay. Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On November 27, 2020 your department issued a request for proposals called "Implementation Service Provider for the Transitional Human Resource Development Strategy" and this request for proposals

ended on January 8, 2020 and it indicated that “Devolution will see the Government of Canada transfer of responsibility for Nunavut’s public,” I assume Crown lands, “freshwater and resources to the government of Nunavut. Taking on this jurisdiction will require the Government of Nunavut to create new programs and new positions to manage these responsibilities,” and that will be “to support the staff of new positions created within the GN as a result of devolution as well as existing vacant positions with GC that will be devolved. The Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Government of Canada will develop a five-year Transitional Human Resource Development Strategy that will be in place leading to the date when responsibility for Nunavut’s public, Crown land, freshwater and resources is devolved.”

I assume offshore and in-water will be an issue for negotiations, but I’m curious which individual has been awarded this contract for this work. Final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A proponent has not been picked yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on page B-9. Devolution Secretariat. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$2,394,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Go back to page B-3. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$21,330,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have concluded the review of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Closing comments, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every time I’m sitting as a witness here, I always thank the members and I will again for making sure that we know our stuff and that we justify on the monies that we spend, on what we spend, and it’s always interesting and informative exchange of information.

Plus, I would like to thank the staff that are here and the staff that are not here that are behind the scenes that put all of this together. It’s a lot of work that we put together and I thank everyone for being here today. (interpretation) That’s it. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Savikataaq. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your staff for being here and answering the questions. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out. We will take a brief break while we set up for the next department. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 14:30 and resumed at 14:32*

Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Legislative Assembly – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Good afternoon again. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. The next department that we have to do is the Legislative Assembly. I would like to ask the Speaker of the House if he has officials that he would like to appear before the committee. Speaker Quassa.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to have officials here with me.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree for the officials to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. The translator is on the wrong channel.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. On my right is the Clerk of the House, Mr. John Quirke, and on my left is the Director of Financial Services and Operations, Marc Rose.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the 2021-22 Main Estimates of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

I'll be speaking English, for your information.

(interpretation ends) The Management and Services Board requested appropriation for 2021-22 is \$28,770,000, which represents a net increase of \$1.5 million from our 2020-21 budget. With internal reallocation of funds between branches, \$1,286,000 of the net increase is for Elections Nunavut for the administration of the general election which will be held on October 25, 2021. An additional \$350,000 as well as two new person years has been allocated to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Members are aware that a motion was adopted unanimously during our 2020 fall sitting to recommend the appointment of Mr. Graham Steele as Nunavut's new Information and Privacy Commission.

I am pleased to inform the members that Mr. Steele relocated to Iqaluit earlier this year and has taken up his duties of the office. To allow for the hiring of staff, Bill 67, *An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Privacy Act*, will be introduced during this winter sitting.

That concludes my short opening comments. (interpretation) Also, I would thank my colleagues for their support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask members to go to page A-4. Assembly Operations. Any questions? Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have questions for the executive, and I will even go up higher with my question. I had asked this question earlier: if a community wanted to become one constituency, what would the policy be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. This time you have the correct department.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you for that very good question. If we are aware of the electoral boundaries, there is a group of people that look at the electoral boundaries. They visit the communities and it would be the Nunavut Boundaries Commission if they decide, then they can get their Member of Legislative Assembly.

Looking at Igloolik; Igloolik and Sanirajak were together after the electoral boundaries visited the communities, looking at the population and then it became two constituencies of Sanirajak and Igloolik. That is an example. Perhaps John can elaborate further on that if it is okay with you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quirke.

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the general election is concluded with, we will have the Sixth Assembly and the Sixth Assembly is required in the year 2022 to strike a boundaries commission. From my experience, I would say that the boundaries commission in 2022 most likely would commence after April 1, 2022. The new Assembly, of course, will just have been started with leadership in November. You will have a little short winter sitting. From my point of view, realistically, the boundaries commission would be struck by the House after April 1, 2022. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Qirngnuq, another question? Or you're good? Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They will follow the boundaries. If they have a certain population then we will probably have an idea when the boundaries commission in 2022 after they completed their work. It is just a comment, but if they want to respond to it, they can respond to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. We will take it as a comment, and you are correct; when the new boundaries commission is formed in 2022, we will take it from there. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to ask questions for the Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wanted to ask about the television broadcast of the Assembly. I know there have been some issues with the providers regarding co-op cable in different communities and I wonder if the Speaker could give an update on where those issues are at and if they are getting fixed? That is my only question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I would just like to briefly say that my fellow *Iglulingmiut* do not have cable and they are not watching today of our sitting. After the Co-op burned, they were only the cable providers unfortunately. There will be a response. John Quirke if it is ok with you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quirke.

Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately... oh, sorry, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Laughter*

It was my day off.

>>*Laughter*

Unfortunately when we started the televised broadcast to the satellite, most... all of our communities were getting the television reception through the co-op television system to direct feed from the satellite to our receivers that we invited to the co-ops.

The co-ops now are breaking away from that type of infrastructure. They are going more into the satellite business in terms of not...you know for you to watch television in some communities, you need a satellite dish and then you buy the programs from them. That means that quite a few of our communities are not receiving our television unless they have a satellite dish, and quite frankly I do not know what the answer is for those places where the co-op has abandoned their traditional distribution and this is on the people buying satellite dishes. I really do not have an answer for what can happen next.

You know obviously kind of forced to buy Shaw Direct or Bell Canada and purchase your own dish, or I believe most co-ops who are offering the service are actually providing the dish for the consumer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on page A-4. Assembly Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted, \$9,211,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page A-5. Expenditures on Behalf of Members. No questions? A-5. Expenditures on Behalf of Members. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted, \$12,225,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page A-6 Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly. Any questions? None. A-6 Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly, Total Operations and Maintenance, To be Voted, \$7,334,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go back to A-3. Office of the Legislative Assembly, Total Operations and Maintenance, To be Voted, \$28,770,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have concluded the review of the Office of the Legislative Assembly?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, any closing comments?

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank all of you. This was very short and I would like to point out that this is probably my last reporting in front of you in 2021. The elections are coming up. I just want to point out. Thank you very much. We will see you very soon. Thank you.

>>*Laughter*

>>*Applause*

Chairman: On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your staff for being here to answer our questions. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out.

**Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 –
Consideration in Committee**

I will ask members if you could go to Bill 59 in your legislative binder.

Okay. Thank you. We're on Bill 59, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Go to Schedule on page 2. Schedule. Amounts Appropriated for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2022. Total Operations. \$1,857,870,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 59 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 59 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. This concludes our review of the 2021-22 main estimates. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon. I'm now at the other vantage point. Thank you. (interpretation ends) Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 59 and would like to report that Bill 59 is concluded and is now ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Netser.

>>*Laughter*

Okay. The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

>>*Applause*

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills**Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Third Reading**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 59, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 59 is now ready for assent.

(interpretation ends) Third Reading of Bills. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder that the Full Caucus will now meet here in the Chamber at 3:15 this afternoon.

Orders of the Day for March 15:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 58
 - Bill 60
 - Bill 61
 - Bill 62
 - Bill 63
 - Bill 64
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 107 – 5(2), this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 15, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 14:51*

