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Wednesday, October 25, 2023

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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Tony Akoak, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Hon. Joelle Kaerner

(Amittuq)

Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Hon. Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs

Mary Killiktee

(Uqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial Management Board; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Alexander Sammurtok

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for Seniors

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Joe Savikataaq

(Arviat South)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Craig Simailak

(Baker Lake)

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Hon. Joelie Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Hon. Daniel Qavvik, Ms. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq.

>> *House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): Good day, my colleagues. Can you say the opening prayer, please, Ms. Quassa.

>> *Prayer*

Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Quassa. Ministers' Statements. Item 2. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

**Minister's Statement 290 – 6(2):
Rebekah Uqi Williams Scholarship**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my fellow members and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to launch the Rebekah Uqi Williams Scholarship, a testament to the legacy of a remarkable

woman who dedicated her life to the service of Inuit and Nunavummiut.

Ms. William's journey in public service began as a nurse, where her caring and compassionate nature shone through in her work. She then ventured into the field of social work, understanding the importance of addressing the broader societal issues that affected the well-being of Inuit. Her career path continued to evolve and she assumed pivotal roles, including Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister, Member of the Legislative Assembly, member of the National Parole Board of Canada, and Deputy Commissioner of Nunavut. Throughout her diverse roles, Ms. Williams was a guiding force, a beacon of integrity, a sharer of cultural knowledge and values.

Today we are proud to launch this scholarship program that will empower and support aspiring social workers from Nunavut. The Department of Family Services is pleased to offer five scholarships, each valued at \$10,000, to students aspiring to pursue a career in social work. These scholarships will alleviate the financial burdens of education, enabling our future social workers to focus on their studies and contribute meaningfully to the well-being of Nunavut. By supporting the education of our future social workers, I believe these resolute individuals will carry forward Ms. William's legacy of compassion, integrity, and dedication to service.

I encourage all eligible students [to apply]. Together we are building a brighter, more compassionate future for Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 291 – 6(2):
Rebekah Uqi Williams**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were saddened by the passing of the respected elder, former Deputy Commissioner, former MLA, and dedicated public servant, my dear *panik*, Rebekah Uqi Williams, on April 14 of this year.

Uqi's passing was deeply felt by the staff at the Department of Justice, where Rebekah worked for many years. Uqi helped establish the department upon the creation of Nunavut and later served as Assistant Deputy Minister for Public Safety for over seven years as well as a term as Deputy Minister. Uqi is remembered at Justice as a voice of reason and a strong advocate for incorporating Inuit perspectives in the justice system, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, and Inuit employment.

During her time with Justice, Uqi played a key role in advocating for the construction of the Nunavut Women's Correctional Centre to ensure that Nunavut's female offenders could remain in the territory. Uqi was instrumental in the creation and development of the Community Justice Division and the expansion of the Community Justice Outreach Worker program and facilitating and coordination of the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* processes. She was the

department's lead in relations with the RCMP, where she promoted Inuit recruitment and RCMP community dialogue and cooperation.

Uqi believed in an accessible justice system that was responsive to the needs of Inuit and reflective of the values of our territory. Nunavut's justice system benefitted from Uqi's leadership, hard work, and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, to honour Uqi's legacy in shaping justice in Nunavut, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Justice will be holding a ceremony in December 2023, bringing together justice officials and members of the (interpretation ends) Williams family (interpretation) to remember and honour Uqi. During this ceremony, the program area at the Aaqqigiavik Correctional Healing Facility, which has been specifically designed for elders' programming and elder client counselling, will be blessed and a plaque will be erected, dedicating the space in Uqi's honour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 292 – 6(2):
Canada's Premiers Support
Infrastructure, Arctic Security**

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good afternoon" to my fellow members and it's great to see the visitors in the gallery who will be recognized.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as Premier, it has been my privilege to sit at the table of all Canadian premiers. Mr. Speaker, on July 11 and 12 the Council of the Federation gathered for an annual meeting to focus our efforts on strong communities and economic growth for a thriving Canada.

Mr. Speaker, these two days of roundtable discussions ranged from housing, affordability, and arctic sovereignty and security to trade corridors, critical minerals, and climate action.

As a result of this meeting, Canada's premiers are now calling for a meeting with the Prime Minister to move forward on a strategic infrastructure plan that enhances trade and supply, strengthens local economies, and builds community resilience. Mr. Speaker, we are seeing unprecedented cost increases to our capital projects, and stretching funds or delaying construction is not a long-term solution, especially as our nation faces destruction due to wildfires.

It's important to note here that the premiers are in unilateral agreement that the infrastructure gap seen in Canada's northern and Arctic regions is unacceptable. In Nunavut we look to see federal investments into national security through dual-use infrastructure, such as telecommunications and transportation. These would address military and security gaps, while supporting northerners and connecting our communities with the rest of Canada.

This summer meeting with Premiers marked the 20th year since the Council of the Federation was created. I look forward to continued partnerships with

our provincial and territorial leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

**Minister's Statement 293 – 6(2):
Community and Government
Services Scholarships**

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to all members and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to share that my department provides financial support for the Technical Professional Studies Scholarship Program to Nunavummiut to pursue post-secondary technical studies in fields such as engineering, informatics, community planning, business studies, and college programs in firefighting, training and prevention, and land administration. This scholarship program supports students pursuing post-secondary education in fields that support the *Katujjiluta* mandate. The scholarship program supports *Pijitsirniq*, serving and providing for family and community.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the Technical Professional Studies Scholarship is administered on an application basis, prioritizing Nunavut Inuit. A total of 25 students received financial support through the program in 2022-23, including 18 Nunavut Inuit, with a total of \$76,000 awarded.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the following recipients of the 2023-24

Sport and Recreation Scholarship and wish them the best of luck as they pursue their goals. The recipients are:

- Haley Hachey of Baker Lake
- Maiya Twerdin of Iqaluit
- Maxwell Joy of Iqaluit
- Naja Pearce of Iqaluit
- Shawna Kyak of Iqaluit
- Zan Tao of Iqaluit
- David Clark of Rankin Inlet
- Parker Faulkner of Rankin Inlet

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the investment my department contributes to Nunavummiut through education and training to build our future contributors to our economies, filling critical roles across the territory and enriching our communities. Congratulations to the recipients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Minister's Statement 294 – 6(2):
Pangnirtung Tuberculosis
Screening Clinic**

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, on September 15 the Department of Health, in partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, mobilized a community-wide tuberculosis (TB) screening clinic in Pangnirtung.

(interpretation ends) There are currently health care and public health services available for tuberculosis right across

Nunavut. This voluntary screening clinic is an additional tool to help manage tuberculosis. The clinic operates out of the community hall, thanks to the partnership with the Hamlet of Pangnirtung. I'm pleased to say that within the first two weeks, over 280 Pangniqtuurmiut were seen for their initial appointment. The clinic is running on schedule to be completed by December.

Uqaqtitsijii, this community-wide screening clinic would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts and contributions from community members, the Hamlet of Pangnirtung, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and others. In addition, our federal partners, such as Indigenous Services Canada, have been a vital component in the rollout of this initiative. Health received support in the form of human resources and clinic supplies from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the National Microbiology Laboratory, and many other health care and public health professionals from across the country.

Uqaqtitsijii, the tuberculosis screening clinic in Pangnirtung is just one example of the Health's and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's collaboration to fight tuberculosis in Nunavut. Health will evaluate the results and lessons learned from the clinic so that we are continuously improving on approach, efficiency, and effectiveness.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Mr. Kaerner.

**Minister's Statement 295 – 6(2):
Promotion of Grants and
Contributions in Taloyoak**

Hon. Joelle Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good day, my fellow members and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today that the Department of Culture and Heritage supports community programming through its grants and contributions. Individuals, community-based organizations, and municipal corporations can apply for financial support for initiatives that promote and preserve Nunavut's culture, heritage, and languages.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, each year, my department visits communities to ensure Nunavummiut are aware of these funding programs. This year, my department will visit Taloyoak on November 20. This presentation will take place at the Hamlet of Taloyoak Community Hall from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., and I urge the community members to take advantage of this visit.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture and Heritage will also have staff available on November 21 to provide in-person support to fill out applications forms. This will take place at the Hamlet of Taloyoak Community Hall from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Nunavummiut to contact the Department of Culture and Heritage's Grants and Contributions Division at chfunds@gov.nu.ca or visit the Government of Nunavut website to explore how these available funds can be

used to support their communities.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 296 – 6(2):
Update on Six Air Terminal
Building Projects**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to provide an update on the construction of new airport terminal buildings in Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Nauyasat, Whale Cove, Kugluktuk, and Kimmirut. Thanks in part to the federal National Trade Corridors Fund, we are now constructing properly sized and equipped facilities to accommodate travellers in all of these communities.

At our winter sitting, this House approved additional funding to allow five of these important projects to proceed into construction, and I am happy to report that all six projects are now progressing well. Site preparation is complete, foundation work is well underway, and most of these buildings will be closed in for the winter.

Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest rewards of serving as minister comes from seeing years of planning finally come together as physical infrastructure. I had the pleasure of touring the project sites in Rankin Inlet and Kimmirut earlier this fall, and I'm sure my colleagues and particularly the members representing these six communities share my

excitement to see these facilities taking shape.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. David Akeeagok: In fact, Mr. Speaker, work on the Kugluktuk and Kimmirut terminals is proceeding so well that there is now a need to shift funds from next year into the current fiscal year so that the contractors can continue their work.

I hope that I can count on my colleagues to support this matter during this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 395 – 6(2): Election Results in Kugluktuk

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Ryan Nivingalok, the newly elected Mayor of Kugluktuk, and thank Simon Kuliktana, the previous mayor, for his dedication in helping the Hamlet of Kugluktuk.

I also want to congratulate the new council board members:

- Lori Rudyk
- Lashawna Taipana
- Lucy Taipana
- Jodi Alderson

- Peter Taktogon
- Keisha Westwood
- Nadene McMenemy
- Angele Kuliktana

I wish you all well and I look forward to working with you for the betterment of our community. Congratulations, once again.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and congratulate the newly elected DEA board members of the Kugluktuk District Education Authority:

- Nadene McMenemy
- Angele Kuliktana
- Barbara Olson
- Darlene Metuituk

I wish them well and I am proud that they have put their names forward to help with education for our future generations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 396 – 6(2): Election Results in Clyde River

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to acknowledge my constituents in Clyde River. Nominations were open and Mayor Laimiki Palluq, was acclaimed. Also acclaimed were: Gordon Kautuk, Mosha Palituq, and Natanine Apak.

For the district education authority, Gina Paniloo was the only person who put her name forward and she was acclaimed.

Sheila Enook was also acclaimed to the alcohol education committee.

Just to encourage everyone; being a councillor or board member is a very important position in the community, so please put your names forward when elections are called because we need to put people on those committees, boards, and councils. I encourage everyone to run because these positions are very important roles in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Just before I go on to the next member, I would like to mention that two members will not be in the House today. The Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak, and the Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak, will be absent today.

Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

**Member's Statement 397 – 6(2):
Student and Internship Programs**

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to, once again, implore our government to increase its supports for our youth.

Mr. Speaker, we all know and repeatedly hear that our youth are the future of Nunavut. We must ensure that they have all the resources necessary to ensure a prosperous future.

In the past, I have given a number of recommendations to improve the Government of Nunavut's programs which benefit our youth. The summer student program currently is initiated at

the end of April, and I've suggested that the Department of Human Resources begin this process in January. This would allow departments to interview students during March break and reading week, and enable students to start working the moment they finish their exams or step off the plane.

As a former financially strapped student, I know firsthand that any delay in starting summer student employment will have a significant impact on a student's ability to save for the upcoming school year. I have also called on the government to increase the budget for the summer student program.

The GN has hired roughly 300 summer students a year, but that doesn't meet the needs of our youth. Nunavut produces, on average, 300 high school graduates a year, and in addition, we have on average, 400 students enrolled in post-secondary institutions. I've also called on our government to expand student employment opportunities to be year-round.

Mr. Speaker, most high school students have very limited employment opportunities, other than Northern and Co-op. The Government of Nunavut should give high school students an opportunity to gain experience before making such life changing decisions such as what to do after graduation.

Lastly, I encourage our government to combine complimentary programs, such as the summer student program and the internships, to ensure that our post-secondary grads are employed upon graduation.

I hereby give formal notice to the Minister of Human Resources that I will be asking questions on these topics at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

**Member's Statement 398 – 6(2):
Election Results in Constituency**

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to formally congratulate people that were elected in my constituency.

For Coral Harbour, the mayor was acclaimed, Kupapik Ningeocheak, and the councillors who were acclaimed are Lucy Netser, Willie Nakoolak, Molly Angootealuk, and Kristal Sharpe.

For DEA acclamations, Darryl Nakoolak, Kidlapik Nakoolak, Jerry Paniuq, Amouyah Eetuk, Akavak Ottokie, Willie Nakoolak, and Lucy Netser.

For Naujaat, the only election that took place was for the mayor and that was Kevin Tegumiar. The acclamations for council are Peter Mannik, John Goss, Steve Mapsalak, Levi Katokra, Rosie Kopak, and Michel Akkuardjuk.

For the DEA acclamations are Jimmy Immingark, Martha Iguptak, John Goss, and Kwong Leong.

For alcohol education are Irene Katokra, John Goss, Theresa Tagornak, Joanna Kopak, and Conna Katokra.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

**Member's Statement 399 – 6(2):
Happy Birthday, James Eetoolook**

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a correction today for yesterday's member's statement. Today is actually Mr. James Eetoolook's birthday.

>> *Laughter*

So I am wishing Mr. Eetoolook a happy birthday. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned many times in the House of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Eetoolook is a champion in many books when it comes to politics.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Eetoolook has always been an inspiration to me. I ask all of my colleagues to pay tribute to Mr. James Eetoolook on this beautiful day. Happy birthday, Uncle James. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

**Member's Statement 400 – 6(2):
Tribute to Malikissaaq Dennis
Malliki and Joachim Nutarakittuq**

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, colleagues and fellow residents of Igloolik.

I rise today to recognize and thank someone who is now one of the eldest people in Igloolik. For as long as I can remember, he always volunteered every

week, clearing snow from the church steps, and he is probably still doing that now. I believe he is now around 89 years old and he continues to do that every week on his own initiative.

His name is Dennis Malliki, or as people know him and usually call him, Malikissaaq, and I would like to thank him.

There is also a young man in our community who is always walking around with a garbage bag picking up littler that people just throw on the ground. He collects it and puts the bags in the garbage. I'm not sure how old he is, but I would like to thank Joachim Nutarakittuq as well.

Nobody has ever told these volunteers to do what they do, yet they do it. It would be good if we could recognize people like that and thank them more often because they do it by their own initiative. It would be even better if we could all thank people like that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Member's Statement 401 – 6(2):
Tuberculosis Screening in
Pangnirtung**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to express my appreciation for the efforts that are being done with regard tuberculosis in Pangnirtung.

I would like to thank the Department of Health and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated for proceeding doing this work. I also want to express my appreciation to the residents of the community of Pangnirtung for welcoming and agreeing to be checked for tuberculosis. Please go if you are asked to. We have to eliminate tuberculosis before it spreads further into the community. We need to provide a positive way to support this. The hamlet has also been active and I would like to thank the employees who are doing this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

**Member's Statement 402 – 6(2):
Annual General Meetings in
Cambridge Bay**

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day, colleagues and Iqaluktuuttiarmiut.

It's annual general meeting season and my community of Cambridge Bay has been busy hosting several important meetings. Last week, delegates from across the Kitikmeot were in Cambridge Bay to participate in the Kitikmeot Inuit Association's annual general meeting where they had the chance to discuss critical issues impacting Inuit in our region.

This week my community of Cambridge Bay is playing host to Nunavut Tunngavik's annual general meeting, which kicked off yesterday. The Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated Board of Directors will be sharing country food

for pick up to all interested community members tonight at six o'clock at the Kiilnik High School. (interpretation) Thank you, NTI.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I regret that I am unable to be there in person to welcome President Ms. Kotierk, the board, staff, and guests, so I want to extend a heartfelt welcome on behalf of all Cambridge Bay residents. I know they will enjoy the friendly Cambridge Bay welcome as they work on critical issues aimed at benefiting all Inuit across Nunavut.

To all of our representatives from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and all of the regional Inuit associations, I want you to know that I look forward to hearing about your meetings and to our continued work collaboratively, to advance issues on behalf of our people. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

**Member's Statement 403 – 6(2):
Tribute to Glenn Williams**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to publicly recognize a person who is in the House who has supported the territory of Nunavut in different capacities. He first served as an RCMP officer when he arrived to the Northwest Territories and he then became a conservation officer in Arctic Bay where he lived for many years and continues to live.

To practically every resident of Arctic Bay, to this day he is called *Ningauraaluk*, or "big son-in-law." He is able to visit us today and I want to voice my appreciation and thanks for his service in various roles related to wildlife issues.

Additionally, when he moved north, he adopted both Inuit traditions and culture, including learning to speak Inuktitut. His Inuktitut is impeccable and he is probably more fluent than I am, just for your information. In saying that, I want to publicly voice my gratitude and to honour him. He has also worked at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated for many years on wildlife issues in the wildlife division.

Most wildlife legislation and regulations have had his involvement since he was representing NTI and Inuit to ensure our harvesting rights are protected. He was deeply involved in this area. At this time, Nunavummiut can deal with wildlife and management issues using the legal groundwork he helped to lay down.

With that scenario in mind, I want to express my great thanks as well as my pride in Glenn Williams *Ningauraaluk*. By namesake, he is my own son-in-law and I want to state my profound appreciation for his service and to voice my pride to honour him. I also wanted to relate that during COVID, my daughter was sick and was largely left alone because of the health restrictions where visitors were not allowed.

He took the time to look after her while she was dealing with her pain, he was constantly at her side and at her beck and call. We are very grateful as a family for

his commitment to look after our daughter. He pretty much left his own needs behind.

At this time, I am glad he is recovering and resting. He and his late wife are in our thoughts. I ask that you take your retirement in stride; rest and occasionally reflect with pride on all of your accomplishments in our territory, which we all remember. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

**Member's Statement 404 – 6(2):
Serving as a Member of the
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut**

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I figured that it is a great opportunity for me to make a member's statement as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Exactly two years ago, on October 25, 2021, we were elected as Members of this Legislative Assembly and we have another 730 days to make meaningful progress to achieve our sixth legislative mandate priorities.

Looking at every MLA in this room, some are into their second-year of experience, some members have six years' experience, and some members have ten years' experience. It's a great pool of experience as a MLA for Nunavut.

I continue to learn from each and every one of you because when I ran as MLA for Hudson Bay, I had no clue how to be

a politician. That being said, I continue to learn from each and every one of you. I'm happy to be your colleague.

I would like to remind Nunavummiut, especially my constituents of Hudson Bay, that we are doing our absolute best to represent our territory and our people in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

**Member's Statement 405 – 6(2):
Working with the Kivalliq Inuit
Association**

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as the Member of the Legislative Assembly representing Arviat North-Whale Cove to express my thanks to Inuit organizations that we work with. It really supports my work and the work I do for my constituents. I would like to thank the board of the Kivalliq Inuit Association. A board member representing Arviat, is Tony Uluadluaq, who is a constituent of mine and someone I went to school with; a person who never changes. From Whale Cove is my constituent, Guy Enuapik. Together, they seem to generally have the same outlook, and that is to move forward in making changes for the future, to improve things that need to be improved in Whale Cove and Arviat. That work that is being done in both Whale Cove and Arviat through the Kivalliq Inuit Association is very encouraging and I support them as a member and I thank them.

Also, I can't forget, from Arviat, Vice-President David Kuksuk, as well as Kono Tattuinee, President of the Kivalliq Inuit Association. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, in working with them, we have a very good working relationship. I thank you and I look forward to positive things in working together. I want to thank you, the Kivalliq Inuit Association representatives, and this is why I rose, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 554 – 6(2): Ethics Officer

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On October 23, 2023, Ms. Janet Pitseolak Brewster, Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, asked in regard to the Ethics Officer.

I rise today to supplement the answer. The function is being performed by an external law firm. There have been four requests for disclosure since January 2023. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Return to Oral Question 550 – 6(2): Remote Work Policy

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to supplement an answer I provided to Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Member for Arviat South.

As of September 22, 2023, there were 50 individuals reported as working outside of Nunavut under remote work; one is Inuk, and five of the 50 individuals fall under the category of supervisor. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Today, I rise to welcome the Williams family to the House. First, I want to recognize Glenn Williams, his son Virgil, and daughter-in-law Shirley Williams. They are here as we announce the creation of the Rebekah Uqi Williams Scholarship. We are very proud to launch this scholarship program to honour the late Rebekah's lifelong dedication to serving Inuit. The scholarship will empower and support aspiring social workers by alleviating the financial burdens of education, enabling them to focus on their studies and contribute meaningfully to the well-being of Nunavut.

By supporting the education of our future social workers, we are able to carry forward Rebekah's renowned and respected legacy of kindness, compassion, integrity and dedication to service. Welcome to the House.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions.

Before going on to the first name, I would just like to make two points: please be respectful to one another fully, as per the rules of the House, and the second point would be to shorten your preambles if you can during question period, and also preambles to the answers to the questions.

>> *Laughter*

Thank you very much. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 565 – 6(2): Staffing Levels at Motor Vehicles Division

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue with the line of questioning I had for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation yesterday. My questions revolve around the Motor Vehicles Headquarters Division office in Gjoa Haven, the Speaker's home community.

I would like to start off with: what is the person-year or the number of positions in that office and how are those positions filled right now? What are the actual staff numbers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Motor Vehicles

Division, there are three positions in Gjoa Haven, and two of those are staffed at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are all those positions at the Gjoa Haven Motor Vehicles Headquarters located in Gjoa Haven? Are they actually located in Gjoa Haven, and if not, where are they currently working from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two are hired in Gjoa Haven are in Gjoa Haven, and the third one, I will follow-up in terms of where the status is at. I just want to make it clear that those three in Gjoa Haven will remain in Gjoa Haven. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motor vehicles staff in Gjoa Haven at headquarters for the last number of years have been working on the Motor Vehicle Information System. I would like to try and get a two-part question in here and hopefully the minister will indulge me and answer both of them.

Mr. Speaker, my first part is: is the Motor Vehicle Information System online in all Nunavut communities, and what impact has it had on turnaround time in producing and delivering drivers' licenses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand corrected; those three positions are all hired in Gjoa Haven, and two of them are beneficiaries and one is a non-beneficiary.

As for the Motor Vehicles Information System, it has been in place and it has done what it is designed to do, and that is to get all the information within the motor vehicles.

Over the last few years, this division has worked really hard to try and advance and improve our licensing systems and the delivery of the systems.

I am happy to note that 24 out of the 25 communities to date have government liaison officers who can enter the information, send it directly, and get it in a timely manner. It has reduced a lot of wait time.

If there are people that are still in wait times, I encourage you to contact our motor vehicles to see what the status is because it has improved significantly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Just like that. Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 566 – 6(2): Caribou Management in Kitikmeot

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment.

As the minister is aware, I have raised a number of questions in the Legislative

Assembly concerning the issue of caribou management in the Kitikmeot.

In June of this year, the department announced the closure of the Bluenose-East caribou harvest near Kugluktuk. This occurred after the community reached its allocation from the total allowable harvest.

In its announcement regarding the closure, the department described the total allowable harvest as a “critical piece in the co-management efforts to allow the herd to recover.”

Can the minister describe what other co-management actions are being taken to support the recovery of the herd? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. The co-management partner has met with the Government of Northwest Territories and completed a composition survey on the calving ground of the Bluenose-East herd. Population indications are showing signs that the population is in a stable state.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is the lead researcher on the Bluenose-East caribou herd and conducted a survey in 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you for the response. (interpretation ends) During

Tuesday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the minister announced that his department has been planning to undertake an abundance survey of the Dolphin-Union caribou herd.

Can the minister indicate when the survey is expected to be completed, and will he commit to tabling the results of the survey in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: There we go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I understood, the first question was for the Bluenose-East herd and now the question is in regard to the Dolphin-Union caribou herd. I believe it was yesterday, on October 23, 2023, my department started the caribou abundance survey within that population. Mr. Speaker, the survey has started now, but the other portion of the survey, which is the collaring program, has been delayed back to March 2024, next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that response. (interpretation ends) In June 2022 the minister's predecessor met with a number of co-management partners to discuss barren ground caribou management in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. The department's announcement indicated that the goal of the meeting was to "Support the conservation and recovery of shared trans-boundary caribou herds; in particular, the Bathurst and the Beverly herds."

Can the minister describe what initiatives have been undertaken over the past year in this area? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. In May through to September 2023, Department of Environment staff consulted with the affected Nunavut and Northwest Territories hunters and trappers organizations and the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board to discuss the next Dolphin-Union caribou abundance survey that started on October 23, 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 567 – 6(2): Devolution

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Both yesterday and today, Mr. Premier Akeagok took some time to compliment me on my line of questions to the minister appearing before COW, so I thought I would give him the opportunity to enjoy my questions personally.

Mr. Speaker, during the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier informed us that he had recently met with the Prime Minister to discuss devolution, which he described as being the "transfer of authority over Nunavut's lands and waters."

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that there are three parties involved in the devolution process; the federal

government, the territorial government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Can the Premier provide a clear update today concerning what specific outstanding issues need to be resolved before a final devolution agreement can be signed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for asking me. I have been eager to be asked a question since we've started on a very important issue. The negotiations of the devolution file have been progressing really well. I couldn't agree more that we have very strong partners in Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, as well as our federal counterparts as we are negotiating the devolution agreement.

We are on track to see the devolution agreement. It is still very sensitive because it is in negotiations, so I can't disclose anything specific at this time, but I'm very confident that as the negotiations occur, that the responsibility for Nunavummiut to make decisions for Nunavummiut is at the core of it, and I look forward to updating the regular members at a convenient time when the negotiations progress are complete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that for many years, decades, people have been looking forward to that agreement taking place.

As the Premier is aware, his department's current business plan indicates that the timeline for devolution has been influenced by the federal government's negotiation processes with impacted indigenous groups.

Can the Premier clarify what specific groups have been involved, and can he confirm what role, if any, is being played by the territorial government in the resolution of their concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my colleague across. Section 35 is very important in terms of allowing the consultations with indigenous peoples. It is one we value and take very seriously. As such, in any negotiations, especially devolution, we know there are indigenous groups that will be impacted.

To date, with information that is before me, there are 13 different indigenous groups that have been consulted throughout, but in particular, two Dene groups obviously have been a key group that were consulted throughout the whole process; as a right in the *Nunavut Agreement*, have issues where the land trans-boundary issues between traditional lands between the Dene as well as Inuit, are identified there as well. I can mention, to date, there have been 13 different groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I imagine dealing with 13 different groups is kind of like herding cats, so good luck with that.

Information published by the government indicates that devolution will bring decision-making closer to home, giving Nunavummiut a greater say in issues that affect us. Final decisions over public land and resource use will be made in Nunavut and not in Ottawa. Devolution will enable Nunavummiut to better control the pace of development and maintain *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq*, or environmental stewardship. As the minister will recall, I recently asked questions to the Minister of Environment concerning the status of the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan, which is also being reviewed by the same three parties that are negotiating devolution.

Can the Premier clarify the extent to which the devolution agreement will be impacted by the review of the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't echo more that it is time that Nunavummiut start making decisions for Nunavummiut and the importance of concluding the negotiations is top of mind for our government.

We have put a lot of our resources to ensure that we see the conclusion as the last jurisdiction in Canada without a devolution agreement. We are ready and

it is time for us to see those negotiations completed.

Mr. Speaker, the draft land use plan is something that our government, through the leadership of my colleague here, is undertaking with our cabinet colleagues here. Those are two separate parallel processes that I can confirm right now. We're in the midst of negotiating the devolution agreement, but I feel very optimistic with the partners that we do have, that I would like to see that concluded in the next little bit.

To answer the member's question, the two different parallel process; the draft land use plan has been submitted for our review as a tri-partite, as well as the devolution agreement that is factored in, but it is in a different parallel process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Question 568 – 6(2): Igloolik School Water Tank and Fuel Tank

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Although I recall receiving correspondence from the minister, it was during her leave. To ensure my constituents and I are able to hear the response, and to have that information available, I will ask my question again.

Mr. Speaker, I have several constituents who have conveyed their concerns to me; several concerned parents have stated that the water tank at Ataguttaaluk Elementary School in Igloolik is leaking. Whenever the tank is refilled by the

water truck, they have to stop at the level where this leakage is, so it is never filled to capacity, and they are constantly running out of water.

Can the minister provide a response to confirm she is aware of this situation, and if any repairs or replacements are planned to resolve the issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to our colleague for the question on Ataguttaaluk Elementary School in Igloolik. First off, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our colleague for the concerns brought forward to herself and our fellow colleague member for Amittuq, who have shared several concerns regarding maintenance of the school. I have been able to raise these issues on their behalf and requested status updates which have been recently shared with both members on the current condition of the school and the work that will be going forward.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the repair or replacement of the water tank the member asked about, the Department of Education is working with Community and Government Services and issuing a building condition assessment. That will go in-depth to look at the school's overall condition. We expect that work to go forward in November 2023. With that, they'll have more updated information on the condition of the water tank, and we look forward to replacing that.

In the meantime, however, Mr. Speaker, there is a short-term solution with the

Hamlet of Igloolik, and they are filling the water tank halfway and also prioritizing water deliveries to the schools. Those are short-term and long-term solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for providing that clarification on this concern. My constituents who are watching will now more fully understand how this matter is being handled.

Mr. Speaker, parents of the younger students informed our office that the students were directed to bring a personal water bottle to the school, and this makes me wonder if the water in the tank in the school may be contaminated and causing stomach aches. I certainly hope not.

Can the minister clarify if this is the case so that parents can hear of any potential issues related to the lack of water and whether or not the water tank has been tested to determine if there are any potential risk that may exist affecting children's health? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for the question in regard to water and using water bottles in the school.

Mr. Speaker, it is always our priority to have the best pieces on infrastructure in our schools and to have them repaired and replaced when needed.

I understand the question of using water bottles out of precaution, Mr. Speaker, for the students to use those water bottles and drink from those as a measure. I would like to say that water is very essential to our communities, and if there are ever any situations that need attention, the department does work with our agency departments like Community and Government Services to ensure that any issues are addressed right away. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, from my department officials, the water is safe to drink at the school.

If there are any updates, I can pass them on to both constituency members and inform them, as well as we will ensure that our school community, our school leaders, and the principals of the school will contact the parents if there is any issue with the water. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the minister for her very good response. I also thank you for this.

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of our students is very important. Not only are there problems with the water tanks, but it has been noted that the school's fuel tank is very close to the entrance and while the students are waiting for the bells to ring, the students often climb onto it, or play around it. This is another health and safety concern.

Can the minister commit to addressing this issue with her colleague at Community and Government Services to ensure that Ataguttaaluk Elementary

School is a safer place for the children to learn? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: It is a question of the safety of students. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member once again for the question in regard to school safety and ensuing that our schools are, in terms of infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, my department does work closely with Community and Government Services and yes, we are working closely together, so I can say that we will, and I can commit that we are working to address the concerns that have been brought forward by both members and their community members in regard to the building needing maintenance issues.

As I stated after the first question, there is a building condition assessment, so members, political servants, and public servants from the Department of Community and Government Services will be going in to do the building condition assessment on Ataguttaaluk Elementary School in November. We are working to have that.

Once that report is done, we can have a better picture of the full scope of work that is required for Ataguttaaluk Elementary School and look for funding to support the needs of that work, as we have our ongoing lifecycle budget, is what we pull from.

I can say that there is a temporary fix to put up a fence around the fuel tank and there will be a more permanent one next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 569 – 6(2): Income Assistance Services

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues will be aware, there is often a lack of employment opportunities in our smaller communities and many people need to rely on income assistance to buy food and pay their bills. Meanwhile the cost of food has been going up and many are struggling.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on when income assistance rates were last adjusted to match inflation and when she anticipates increasing the rates again to help Nunavut residents meet the rising cost of living? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) I do understand the issue and very clearly know the issues we're facing, especially with the costs increasing even more so in recent times. We did increase income assistance benefits recently by 34 percent to better support families who are receiving income assistance benefits. So that has recently increased.

I know it took a while for that to kick in, especially when we had the last increase in 2015, and we just recently increased

that this year by 34 percent.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of my constituents was denied income assistance for three or four months because they did not have a valid piece of identification. It is not easy to get new identification in our smaller communities. It takes time, and there's a lot of paperwork to go through. When a community member is already struggling to provide for themselves, this seems a very bureaucratic answer to their request for assistance. I could almost say it is unfair. Luckily, another constituent of mine helped this individual out so they could buy food.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly explain why an income assistance worker would deny support to a client instead of helping them get the necessary documentation so they can continue to receive the benefits they need to survive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) I'm not aware of any clients being refused for four or five months unless their income threshold was reaching up to their allowable.

In terms of lacking IDs and so on, I would recommend the community members go to the GLOs because I

know they work in that area of providing some IDs to people in the communities.

I would certainly recommend that to the client, but if there are any issues in not receiving income assistance for more than a couple of months because of ID issues, we would certainly like our office to be notified and not at a community level, but also headquarters or myself, because we do get frequent requests for review. I certainly would recommend that to the clients in the communities.

When it comes to getting more support at a community level, I know the community liaison officers do provide ID supports in the communities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents have to wait days for their income assistance to be deposited into their accounts. Sometimes, it doesn't arrive at all and they have to contact the head office in Cambridge Bay, but it takes a long time to get through to the head office to find out why their assistance has been delayed or not provided.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us whether she's aware of these delays in providing income assistance payments in the Kitikmeot region, and if so, what steps are being taken to address the situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. I thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) One of the issues that we've had that has been a reoccurring issue is the lack of documentation at times from the clients end not providing all the documents to the office.

The other issue that we have been encountering is, depending on which bank they are dealing with, sometimes the direct deposits are not deposited on the day of. Sometimes, depending on which bank they deal with, it might take a few days for those to be deposited, but we are trying to improve that area as well.

In some areas, if we are able to work on that from our department, we are trying to see how we can better improve that service in that area, but we also have to keep in mind that all the documentation needs to be received by the income assistance workers. When it comes to bank information, that takes a bit more time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet-North, Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 570 – 6(2): Granular Management

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister of Community and Government Services, and they concern the important issue of granular management.

As the minister is aware, Nunavut communities require adequate quantities of high-quality gravel in order to move

forward with the construction of new housing and other infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is also aware, concerns have been expressed by the Municipality of Chesterfield Inlet concerning the community shortage of gravel and the need to identify a new source of materials.

Mr. Speaker, information provided by the minister indicates that the Municipality of Chesterfield Inlet recently submitted a proposal to his department under his new Granular Crushing Program.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of his department's review on the municipality's proposal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question, and again, his persistence on this topic has not gone unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, my department does recognize the importance of granular supply for municipalities to pursue for either housing or infrastructure development, as well as maintaining airport runways and the roads. This is a crucial part of municipal programs.

My department has surveyed municipalities to better understand the granular needs, including stockpiles, equipment, and the estimated life of their granular source. Through that process, we solicited proposals under this new program. We had three municipalities

that had submitted, including Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, and Kinngait.

My department is still conferring and reviewing those proposals. We will confer with successful applicants to arrange and procure equipment for the sealift in summer of 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recall, I raised the issue of granular management during the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly. At that time, the minister informed the House that his department is planning to undertake quarry studies in a number of Nunavut communities over the course of the summer to survey and identify available sites. Mr. Speaker, I fully support this important work.

Can this minister confirm what quarry studies were actually completed during the summer, and will he commit to providing the results of the studies to the mayors and the Members of the Legislative Assembly representing the impacted communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, my department surveyed municipalities in the past to better understand what communities' granular program needs are. Through this survey, we understood that there are eight communities that are capable of crushing operations, while 16

communities do not have necessary equipment to produce granular for land and road maintenance and development.

The need is great and we're working through our program to address it bit by bit and we have the three proposals under review, and we do hope those communities will be addressed for the next year or two once the proposal process is... .

We again encourage other communities to come forward with their proposals. This funding program, again, has been an exciting program for municipalities and I look forward to the results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, the Nunavut Planning Commission recently submitted its proposed new Nunavut Land Use Plan to the federal Minister of Northern Affairs, the territorial Minister of Environment, and the President of Nunavut Tunngavik.

Can the minister describe the extent to which the proposed new land use plan will impact efforts on the parts of the territorial government and municipalities to identify and develop new sources of granular material? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the draft land use plan that's still under deliberation, my department, along with other impacted

departments, are trying to be mindful around how that land use plan would be, or how to move forward best, in concert with municipalities and their needs. My department will keep a close eye and ears on this matter and consult with municipalities on a way forward through the land use planning process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 571 – 6(2): Community Elder Care

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health. There is a growing need to train individuals to provide care services for senior elders in our communities that would assist them.

I would like to ask this question again to the minister: can the minister clearly describe what planning is underway within the department, in collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College, for the smaller communities to deliver personal caregiver training through Nunavut Arctic College, especially for my constituency?

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, when our elders don't have serious health issues, we want them to be able to stay home, and live in their home communities. However, instead of concentrating on training caregivers who could assist elders so that they could stay at home, our government is focusing on building big care homes in Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly explain why there is more emphasis on building institutional facilities instead of working to develop residential elder care services in our communities?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for the question. It is a two-part question from the way I understand it. Some of it has to do with education and then it gets into capital. I will try to respond to it.

Yes, these proposed elder care facilities in the three communities were identified through a process, resulting in construction plans for the facilities. The Rankin Inlet facility is already under construction and nearing completion. The other two facilities in Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit, as identified, are now getting preliminary work done, and during this fall sitting, the planning funding is included in our estimates.

However, we also understand that the longer-term strategy is to identify smaller communities; actually, all the communities. If more care services or facilities are provided for local elders, then we also know that this would mean they would remain home longer before requiring care at these regional facilities.

We are not just focused on a single approach in terms of providing our elders with care as we have a multi-pronged approach to ensuring we provide services in different categories on a more personal level.

(interpretation ends) I'll switch to English because I'm losing my words here. In terms of the importance of home care, it has been raised a couple of times this sitting. It is something that we really do support and we really do want to see expansions to home care. It is something, as I've mentioned recently, the numbers keep going up in terms of the number of clients that we have, the number of staff we have.

To summarize, the Department of Health understands that it is not just about long-term care homes; it is also about supporting community-based initiatives. It goes beyond the Department of Health. That is where the work, being led by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs on a seniors strategy is so important to take that whole-of-government look at supports.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, this approach is very good, with these elder care facilities providing the care they so definitively need in the three communities that were mentioned in particular.

However, from my perspective, some elders will still need to travel from their communities to these regional centres, so we should proceed with these elder facilities in the smaller communities, and with this as my basis, I have the perception that elders will still leave their home communities.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I believe many of my colleagues will

agree with me when I say that we want community members, especially our elders, to be able to receive the services and support they need at home instead of being sent out. We need programs for Nunavummiut to receive training and education to benefit from employment opportunities and to continue to promote positive and healing environments at home in our communities.

By saying that, Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on what programs are currently in place to recruit, train, and certify Nunavummiut for employment opportunities in the healthcare field? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for that question. (interpretation ends) There are a number of different training programs that are available. One of our flagship programs... not our program, it's Nunavut Arctic College's program, and it is the nursing program. It's a five-year program if you include the pre-nursing course. It's a five-year program and it's ongoing.

We also have an LPN program. I apologize for the use of the acronym. The LPN program, which is currently running in Rankin Inlet is also through the college.

In terms of home care and specifically supporting the elders in every community in Nunavut, the new personal care skills course that is being run by Nunavut Arctic College is being piloted and delivered remotely to home care workers in three communities. At

the end of this month, we are going to collect feedback on the success and challenges related to the delivery of this new course. We have eight students currently participating from Igloolik, Pangnirtung, and Cambridge Bay.

We look forward to making more opportunities available for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for the explanation. Looking at the completion of this pilot project and the review of the way the pilot played out sounds fascinating.

Yesterday my colleague representing Tununiq asked questions on this matter, and your response then also included a reference to training and educational needs. You also stated that \$60 million in funding was allocated towards different programs that will help develop skills.

Be that as it may, you stated once the pilot project review was completed, the results would be better understood. Can you provide further information as to whether Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River, as well as other smaller communities, would be offered this same training within the community learning centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with that assessment, and we will delve deeper

into that area, especially with the training modules that will be offered and which communities will receive the targeted training courses. Our intent is to support every community regardless of the size, whether it is as small as Qikiqtarjuaq, or even as large as Iqaluit. We are supporting every community to ensure our elders remain as close to home as possible, where relatives can be close by, and we understand that desire.

The member's comments are quite understandable and we are also anticipating the completion of the seniors' (interpretation ends) strategy, (interpretation) which falls under Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. It won't solely be the Department of Health, but will be a government-wide strategy for elders that we will be a part of once it is completed. We expect the strategy will serve to provide more support for our elders in Nunavut and will have many positive outcomes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 572 – 6(2): Nunavut Member of Parliament's Private Bill C-326

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, to the people of Arviat.

(interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Mines. Yesterday I asked these same questions. I have with me a newsletter from the Member of Parliament for Nunavut. I will just reiterate what was said there, just for the benefit of the Minister of Mines.

“On March 10, 2023, I tabled Bill C-326 on behalf of Nunavummiut. This Bill is part of my work to fight for your rights, to help protect the wildlife and environment from corporate greed.

What is in my bill?

Bill C-326, *An Act to Amend the Territorial Lands Act*, is a Private Member's Bill.”

Why did the MP introduce it?

“My Bill seeks to align Nunavut's *Territorial Lands Act* with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). If passed, my Bill would require resources extractors to obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples when developing on Indigenous land. The current system is flawed and I hope to fix it.”

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the same questions. The Minister of Environment did not agree with the MP's comment that the system is flawed; that the current system we have in Nunavut is not flawed. I'll ask the Minister of Mines: does the Minister of Mines agree or disagree with the Member of Parliament's statement that “The current system is flawed and I hope to fix it”? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with those comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Great minds think alike.

>> *Laughter*

I'll ask the Minister of Mines then; there's mining in Nunavut, and there's been mining here for quite a while now, and in my region of the Kivalliq, it's been beneficial for employment. I'll ask the minister: in the minister's position there, has mining overall in Nunavut been a net gain, or a minus gain for Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mines have been welcome in this territory, and we have seen the benefits of mining, and it's through those very rigorous regulatory regimes that we do have, that Nunavummiut have been able to provide input, and Nunavummiut are seeing the benefits of mining. We support all sectors of any of our economy, and with mining our gross domestic product is very high, thanks to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear the minister's position on whether it was a net gain or a minus gain, but from the positive comments he said, I believe the minister is stating it is a positive gain for Nunavut to have mines extracting our resources and creating employment as long it's done responsibly and environmentally-

friendly and has gone through all the rigorous regulatory channels that they have to go through.

Mr. Speaker, staying on mining there, I'll ask the minister's position: is Nunavut open for mining? Are we a welcoming territory for mining? We know that the NIRB process recommended against phase 2 in Baffinland, but I'd like to ask the minister now: in the minister's position, is Nunavut open for mining; proper mining, as long as it's done environmentally friendly and sustainable? Is the minister's position that Nunavut is open and welcoming for mining companies to mine within Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My member colleague's preamble on that, I fully support and echo his preamble on when it comes to mining. Also, in short, I was trying to say it is beneficial for this territory, and our government remains open. Through our mining strategy, *Parnautit*, we will be updating that within our life of this government to showcase Nunavut on the opportunities. There are a lot of opportunities and if you do it with the right companies, it can be environmentally sound.

Through our institutions of public government that were created under the land claims, those are working. The one that we are waiting for is the Nunavut Draft Land Use Plan to be finalized. We have the final draft and I'm very fortunate that we are one of the three signatories. That's something that I'll

work very closely with my colleagues and as a government to ensure that there is a balance when it comes to whether there is going to be mines or protection. We need to find that balance and I am very eager to work closely with my colleagues on that. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 573 – 6(2): Community Infrastructure

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that all Nunavut communities have adequate community infrastructure, including community halls and arenas.

Mr. Speaker, these are places in which our constituents gather together for important events.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I recently wrote a letter to him in order to raise concerns about the urgent need for electrical safety deficiencies to be addressed at Coral Harbour's arena.

I was pleased that the minister's reply to me indicated that \$40,000 had been approved for this work. Can the minister confirm if the funding has been released to the municipality?

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, my department does recognize that these recreational spaces in communities, like arenas, play an important part and are a big component of community active life. We do try to support municipalities to maintain and keep those facilities open.

Mr. Speaker, the Sports and Recreation Division has approved \$40,000 to support the Hamlet of Coral Harbour for 2023-24 to complete the required work to the arena. Whether or not those funds have been disbursed to the hamlet, I don't have that information, but I can follow up with the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that response. I will expect to hear a response from the minister as to whether the community has received those funds.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, Naujaat lost its community hall in a fire that occurred in early October of 2022, just over a year ago.

As the minister will also recall, I subsequently presented a petition in this House concerning the need for a new facility for the community. In his response to the petition, the minister indicated that "The community hall in Naujaat was a municipally-owned asset, and as such, was insured through the Nunavut Association of Municipalities Insurance Exchange. Once the hamlet initiates the claims process, the Department of Community and

Government Services will provide support to the municipal administration as it begins the process of replacing the community hall.”

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work?

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for bringing that question forward. Mr. Speaker, the Naujaat community hall was a devastating loss for the community.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of what the status is on that particular project, I do understand that my department has been trying to coordinate and reach out in working with the officials at the municipality, in light of that asset having been insured through the Nunavut Association of Municipalities insurance program.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the hamlet does want to move forward on that process, however, I think with the recent elections, I understood there may have been some turnover at the senior administrative officer level as well.

So making sure that things are up to date on that front, I can say that we are trying our best to help the community in this situation and we do hope that the insurance program will see a new hamlet office for Naujaat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister just stated “a new hamlet office for Naujaat,” but they never expressed a desire for a hamlet office. Their wish, rather, is to get a community hall. I just wanted to clarify that so he won’t repeat his mistake.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it is very important that critical infrastructure in the communities be kept up to code and receive regular fire, electrical and safety inspections.

The 2023-24 main estimates of the Department of Community and Government Services indicates that it has a total of 25 positions in the Safety Services Division of the Infrastructure Branch.

Can the minister confirm today how many of these positions are currently vacant? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I apologize for the confusion. That reply was intended for the Member for Sanikiluaq whose community will be getting a new hamlet office. I know we are talking about the community hall in Naujaat. Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

(interpretation ends) Regarding the staffing levels, I couldn’t find the right briefing note on that matter, but I can say that we do try to go through the recruitment process on any vacancies we do have, and for those positions that are filled, they do have a workload that they have to manage.

Again, for these facilities, safety services does provide ongoing services, regular inspections for facilities throughout new constructions, but also for existing facilities on a regular basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 574 – 6(2): Student and Internship Programs

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources.

As the minister is aware, I have been a consistent and strong advocate of student and internship programs which will be the topic of my questions today.

As the minister will recall I have spoken on a number of occasions about the importance of insuring student focused employment programs provide a clear path to full-time careers after graduation.

As I mentioned in my member's statement, I highlighted some of the recommendations for improvements in this area.

I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide the House with an update on how the Department of Human Resources has been working towards these goals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank for your question.

(interpretation ends) The Summer Student Employment Equity Program is very successful on a yearly basis, as the member knows, and is quite popular for our Nunavummiut youth. We have been talking about how we can better improve this program to better support our youth, especially in employing them within the public service.

The popularity is quite high, so we've had to increase the funds in that area to ensure that we meet the program. We are looking at different options on how we can better service it and how we can better make it long-term as well; not just for the short periods of the summer, as you had mentioned in your member's statement. Those are some of the things that we are having discussions on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. During the winter sitting earlier this year, I was very happy to support the Department of Human Resource's request to increase the budget for the summer student program.

However, the budget increase was based on historical actuals and really moved the fiscal burden from departments to HR. There is still room from improvement in the budget area to meet the needs of all of our high school graduates and post-secondary students.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to my next question, the *2020-2021 Public Service Annual Report*, which was tabled in the Assembly during June of 2022, indicated that the Sivuliqtiksat program had 4 of

16 positions filled, which remained constant from the 2019-2020 annual report, which also indicated that there were 4 of 16 intern positions filled.

I would like to ask the minister if she would be able to provide an update to the House on the current status or utilization of the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I would like to thank you for your question. We are currently in the midst of review the Sivuliqtiksat program to see how it can be improved.

When government staff want to take further training, there are different programs available to them. We are also looking into the detailed information on how we can improve and amend the Sivuliqtiksat program, as well as seeing what staff would like in order to ensure it is aligned with their needs. This is included in our review.

These comprise different categories where the operational requirements are also different, and the Sivuliqtiksat program alumni are also increasing as more staff graduate from it. The funding is specific to these (interpretation ends) 16 intern positions (interpretation) currently under the 2023-24 budget estimates, and currently the positions stand at 60 percent filled. This is where it stands at the moment under the 2023-24 estimates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank the minister for that response. I am very happy to hear that the Department of Human Resources is looking at areas to make improvements to the Sivuliqtiksat program. I'm not sure if I exactly caught a figure for the current utilization, but I'll double check the *Blues* on that tomorrow.

Moving on to my next line of questioning, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories offers two complimentary employment programs for students and youth; one, being the summer student program and the other, being an internship program, which provides full-time employment opportunities for graduates who have successfully completed their post-secondary program.

Mr. Speaker, the 2019 Office of the Auditor General's Report on *Support for High School Students and Adult Learners* noted that the "education system had a number of gaps and barriers that made it difficult... to succeed academically and transition to post-secondary..." and that the Government of Nunavut had not adequately supported youth in this transition.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that pairing the summer student program with internship supports for our students has the potential to satisfy the Auditor General's recommendations, provide full-time employment for our post-secondary graduates, and increase Inuit employment to achieve a representative public service.

I would like to ask if the minister would consider creating a new intern program specifically for post-secondary graduates, recognizing that the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program is limited to only current GN employees, which would disqualify recent graduates from utilizing this internship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for your question. These are two slightly differing issues that our colleague is referring to. Our program review of the Sivuliqtiksat program is focused on its operational functions and is entirely towards our government employees.

We are conducting a comprehensive review of all the inner contents of this program. Further, we have surveyed students for temporary spring or summer employment. We are looking to improve this offering and to recommend ways that would make this more efficient and this will also be part of this review I alluded to.

This is not in alignment with the Government of the Northwest Territories as we are unaware of the similarities. However, in looking at the popularity of the programs amongst our staff, it identifies more parameters requiring further deliberation and reconsiderations. We are currently discussing these matters, but we can try to incorporate the ideas he commented on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I have no more names for oral questions. Members be aware the time allotted for question period is now over. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 173 – 6(2): 2018-19 Nunavut Lottery Financial Statements

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the 2018-19 *Nunavut Lottery Financial Statements*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters, Bills 31, 32, 33, 35, and 36 and Tabled Documents 1 – 6(2), 73 – 6(2), 120 – 6(2) and 163 – 6(2) with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

Before we proceed with Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House recessed at 15:34 and
Committee resumed at 16:00*

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

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): 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 31, 32, 33, 35, and 36 and Tabled Documents 1 – 6(2), 73 – 6(2), 120 – 6(2), and 163 – 6(2). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of Bill 31, the 2024-25 Capital Appropriation for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, followed by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Is the committee in agreement that we deal first with Bill 31?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 31 – Appropriation (Capital) Act,
2024-2025 – Nunavut Housing
Corporation – Consideration in
Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee with you?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to allow the minister to officials appear with him?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed. When you are ready minister, please introduce your officials for the record.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Mr. Juanie Pudluk, Associate President, and to my right, Eiryn Devereaux, President and CEO of Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Where we left off yesterday, as mentioned, Nunavut Housing Corporation has one-page in the budget line. Nunavut Housing Corporation, request for appropriation: \$82,669,000. The next name I had on my list was Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few questions and follow-up questions here from questions that were asked and responses here, and some from the opening comments.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question on the opening comments on the first page about the “The GN’s funding for public housing is proposed to decrease from \$70 million in 2023-24, to \$40 million in 2024-25.” I’m just curious as to why, when public housing is so badly needed, they would put it down \$30 million. When Mr. Lightstone questioned him on how much money they actually have that they carried over and have, it’s \$280 million. If they have \$280 million, I don’t understand why they are putting... . If we can get an explanation of why the budget has decreased by \$30 million when they have a whole lot of money to keep it at that level. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is because the funding that we asking for is going to be enough to be able to do what we can do in building this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister explain what “there is enough money to do what we can do, what we need to do?” Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my colleague realizes that it would be nice to be able to build 1,000 houses in a building season, but that is just not able to be done with the amount contractors that are out there that can do the work within the budget parameters that we are asking. I believe that right now with the number of houses that we are going to build, we are pretty much at maximum capacity right now, and we hope in the future to be able to build more than that. That is where we are at right now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the government’s mandate they want to build a minimum of 1,000 public housing units the first summer; last summer of 2022, zero public houses were built, or had started to be built. The existing ones that were already in production were completed. This year they plan for 182, so that leaves 818 for

three summers. It is not possible then if 182 is pretty well the maximum that they can build a summer. Is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like the way my colleague tunnels the responses to seem like that’s what we mean forever.

No, for this building season that we are asking for money for, those are the numbers. We are hopeful that the next year after that, or the year after that, we will be able to get more interest in building houses and the capacity to build more houses would happen.

In terms of the funding for this year, these are the amounts so we could build the houses that we are out to build. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last building season, I believe either 62 or 66 housing units were cancelled this year was due to the cost, and the only construction going ahead, and I stand to be corrected, are the NCC units that were the sole-sourced for them to build.

The building season is upon us. Do we have a construction cost of square footage that the Nunavut Construction Corporation is charging the Housing Corporation? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Devereaux, through you, elaborate a bit more the details around the construction, Mr. Chairman.

It is correct; last year we could not build those units that we had put out RFPs for because they were just ridiculously high, anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a square foot.

If I could have, through you, Mr. Devereaux elaborate more on the response, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Please proceed, Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. The contract with the NCC and the one we are currently negotiating hoping to get approval for in the coming weeks; the cost per square foot is in the range of \$600. Similar to last year, we have seen some escalation, but we are still in that range of \$600 per square foot; plus or minus for construction costs.

Just one other additional clarification around the plan for the upcoming 2024-25 construction season; in addition to the proposed units that we are contemplating building with NCC, we also do plan to go out with an RFP tender for 36 units. I think that was mentioned yesterday as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Staying on the construction season there, the 22 modular units that the Nunavut Housing Corporation purchased last spring in some of the

communities for Nunavut Construction Corporation workers to stay in; what was the landed cost on average for those modular units for NCC construction workers to stay in? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The landed cost is approximately \$500,000 per unit, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the arrangement for NCC construction workers that are coming in from the south and generally will not be Nunavummiut in communities, staying in these places?

What is the arrangement for NCC? Are they paying a lease, a monthly lease on it? Is it so much a construction bid in the place? Can we get an explanation of how, if any, payments NCC will be making because this is part of the construction cost that the Nunavut Housing Corporation is absorbing? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I mentioned that amount, that is the turnkey amount that's about \$500,000 that is liveable. Mr. Chairman, what that entails is that the construction crew can stay at these units for \$1 per month and we save in terms of, if they didn't do that, the Housing Corporation would have had to pay for their room and board had they

found room and board elsewhere. About \$1.5 million was deducted from the contract to be able to do this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: It's a sweet deal if you can rent a decent sized place for a dollar per month, but is it the Nunavut Housing Corporation or NCC that is responsible for maintaining and [paying] the utilities on these, for lack of a better word, "bunkhouses?" Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's one or the other. Either they stay in our place and at the end of the day we have a building, or they charge us a couple hundred thousand dollars for room and board in a hotel. So it's not free, Mr. Chairman. At the end of the day, NCC is responsible for those costs, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just curious: if you want a good deal in communities, is this option available for the open tender market public housing units that go out for RFP or tender too? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We could look at it, Mr. Chairman. Most of the companies that do, in the open market tender, have bunkhouses already in most of the communities. So it's something that, if

there was interest from the open market, it's definitely something we could look at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier, when it was asked yesterday about the construction schedule by one of the members, the minister stated that it's on schedule. NCC must have employees by now. Does the minister know what the Inuit employment rate is now for NCC's construction season? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The companies are just starting now. I think, for the most part, the piles have just been installed in some of these communities and they are just finalizing the installation of these units.

I don't have any figures in front of me right now in terms of the Inuit rate, currently, but the goal is to have a minimum of 30 percent throughout the life of this contract. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This announcement or media release, back from April 28, came from the NCC and the Housing Corporation, "The design-build negotiated construction contracts for 132 public housing units outside of Iqaluit" which it's a bit more now because the minister was stating that in some places, they were able to get a better deal, but it was

132 public housing units roughly that we're looking at.

I just happened to see here that NCC issued to the market on October 13, 2023, and I'll read it, "NCC Development Limited," here referred to as NCCD, "100% Inuit-owned development, construction and property management company operating in Nunavut, Canada, has issued a request for proposals from qualified companies for the design, manufacturing, and supply of 132 prefabricated residential units that will accept sealed requests for proposals for services described in this RFP document." Is it a coincidence, or is NCC going to be building and bringing in prefabricated public housing units into the communities that are getting the public housing units? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those units are NCC's units, Mr. Chairman.

Now, it may be at the end of the day, they might come to us for affordable housing funding for some of those units, but that is NCC's work, Mr. Chairman, not the corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I am aware that they would be NCC units; it's their RFP, but since it is just the minister's position, is it just coincidence that the announcement was for 132 public housing units and the RFP is for 132 prefabricated units? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The NHC had nothing to with putting that advertisement out, or doing that. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So to the best of the of minister's knowledge, the construction season that's coming on right now, this coming year, they are not prefabricated units that NCC is going to be selling to the Nunavut Housing Corporation. They are a whole bunch of two-by-fours and plywood and people will have hammers and nails and hire some local Inuit workers to put these houses together. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Public housing is working with Nunavut Construction Corporation on the 146 units that I had mentioned yesterday and today, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister is not answering my question. To the best of his knowledge, for this season, they are not prefabricated units coming into the communities; these are stick-built houses that are being built for public housing within Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are not modular units, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I don't have much time left here, so I will move on. Another topic that keeps coming is the fire replacement units. In 2023-24, there was no construction, but for this year, 2024-25, is any of that fire unit money being used to construct new housing in any of the communities that are getting public housing? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm having trouble reading this graph. I think Mr. Devereaux has better eyes for it. If I could have him respond through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. In the upcoming 2024-25 proposed build program, yes we would do replacement on Taloyoak, which had a fire occur in 2022-23.

We also have fires that occurred in our public housing portfolio in that same year in Rankin Inlet and Baker Lake. So we would anticipate as we build public housing units in those communities, that we would use some of the existing funding in that fire damage fund to accommodate those additional builds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Since I don't have much time left here, I was just curious; going back to that \$280 million that's cash, or cash equivalent on-hand, and they can only build so many houses because either the workforce is not there, or the materials are not there, why are they even asking for money? Why don't they use the \$280 million, because if you add the money that's being currently asked for, then it's going to come out to \$340 million, and they certainly can't spend that within the next time frame? It seems to be just packing the bank account. If we can just get an answer on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Devereaux, the president, respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Please proceed, Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. Some of the surplus funds currently within the Nunavut Housing Corporation's financial statements are tied to third party federal funding. Some of that federal funding money does provide us with options to spend it this year and next year. So there are some surplus dollars, a sizeable amount, in our current books that are coming from third party sources.

This year, we are targeting a budget allocation that will allow us the flexibility to deliver a very large program compared to prior years. Also, we hope to launch a new suite of

programs that was mentioned. If that is approved, then we also anticipate maybe some of that surplus money could go towards to increased housing supply associated with those new programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'd like to go to page two of the opening comments from the minister. He is "...pleased to see that we are proposing a new modern version of the HAP program as well as new affordable housing incentives for both rental and homeownership." Can the minister elaborate on that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've been hearing across the territory the need and how great the homeownership programs used to be before Nunavut.

In some of the discussions we've had; from senior staff level, on what are some of the programs we could improve or change in our territory, and that kept coming up. In our discussions with some regular MLAs, that topic kept coming up, so we are looking at creating a new Homeownership Assistance Program 2.0, for lack of a better term. We would like to announce that shortly.

Also, there are some funds available from the feds and other sources in terms of creating some affordable housing incentives. These are driven by the

private sector and the public sector. We can help the private sector build affordable rental units or lease to own, or whatever, in terms of affordable housing; those are two of some of the suite of programs that we are working on, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Is there a timeline for these programs to be published? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They are just going through the process now. They are on the latter stages of that, so I would really like to have these published before the end of November, Mr. Chairman. I would like to catch the first ship coming north, so time is essential and I am hoping to be able to do that then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) With the application for these programs, there is a threshold where if you make an X amount of money, you can't access these programs. Is that threshold going to increase? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Malliki. That is a very good question. I think it was 2014 the last time those thresholds were increased. Minister.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe yesterday, when this was brought up, I had said that we are taking a look at those thresholds and seeing where they can be improved and more enticing for people to apply, instead of a deterrent. So we are working to ensure that it is more inclusive of thresholds, than exclusive, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for the clear response. The income thresholds are a big barrier for people who are interested owning their own homes. I would really like that program to be utilized properly. That is all I wanted to say, but I would like to move on to a different topic.

With Nunavut 3000, there doesn't seem to be any planning for elder homes. I would like to ask if that can be added to the plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we also realize that there are no units slated for elders, but if the community requests more elder homes, then we can get the work started on that.

We know that there are houses available that can be retrofitted for elders instead. We try to accommodate their requests. If the community knows that there are units that are suitable for elders, then they can change them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan is to have them completed by 2030. It would be really good if we could see elder homes included. We don't want all of our elders to go into elder facilities. As long as elders have a helper, they can live in a (interpretation ends) two-bedroom (interpretation) house along with their helper. I would like that included in the planning process.

Where a community has not requested elder facilities, is there a plan by the Nunavut Housing Corporation to give them elder homes or homes slated for elders anyway, because we have elders in every community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I completely understand what my colleague is saying. We will take a closer look into that and see if there is room for improvement and try to accommodate some of the builds so they are suitable for elders, with the light switches easily reached and the doorways suitable for elders. I will take my colleagues suggestions and work on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move on to a different question. There are many people on waiting lists for homes. Has the Nunavut Housing Corporation made any plans to do something about the long waiting lists? People get on the waiting

list because they want houses, and they are told that once they get (interpretation) 100 points (interpretation) they will be able to get a home. How does that work? How do they get the points? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): That question is not related to capital, Mr. Chairman, but for the communities we spoke about yesterday having waiting lists that are quite long, when houses are constructed, it brings the number of people on list down. However, we do look at the number of points you have before you can get a house in terms of the rating system.

When working with the LHOs, we realize the shortage of housing is very real. In terms of the units that the construction crews are currently staying in, once they are done the construction they are there to do and they don't require those units any longer, we will work with the communities to either allocate them as shelters or some kind of use related to housing that they can be used for once they are vacated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have too many more questions. Yes, I agree with you. This is one of the major issues with the lack of housing. It affects everyone. My colleague, Mr. Savikataaq, was enquiring about the budget going down from \$70 million to \$40 million for all of

the requirements of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, if we didn't think it would be enough, we wouldn't have set it at that amount. Based on what we know, it will be enough. I think we all want to see more houses being built. I have met with the board of directors of the housing corporation and we have come up with more options to increase the housing stock.

We held a housing forum here in Iqaluit this spring and we had delegates from all across Nunavut and the country that feel for this issue. We also saw and had discussions with people who have not constructed buildings in Nunavut before that would like to be involved in construction in the territory and it's great that we are now looking at more cost-effective methods. It's not going to be addressed today, but it is encouraging to hear that we are now planning for the future.

It seems that we have awoken our fellow Canadians to see that we are in a dire situation as Nunavummiut. When Nunavut was created, we had a shortage of office space, health centres, schools, and particularly housing. It has been a lot of work, but it has been rewarding, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go to Mr. Quqqiaq, it has been brought up a couple of times here, and I think the people listening at home might have a little bit of trouble comprehending such a large carryover still sitting in the coffers of the Nunavut Housing

Corporation, yet the request is for \$70 million more, or \$82 million in total. Like Community and Government Services a few years ago with their preplanning fund, there was a time where they were carrying over, carrying over, where they decided they needed a catch-up year, so they didn't put any new funds into that.

To try and find a way to compare, I know Mr. Devereaux went into some of the discussions on third party funding and different types of agreements, but I think for a lot of people it is difficult to comprehend having well over \$200 million in the bank that is available to build housing, and yet you are still asking for more.

I wonder if the minister or Mr. Devereaux would be able to explain in laymen's terms how that is going to work and how that surplus is going to come into effect to at some point build houses, which is what it was originally appropriated to do. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I thought you were going to Mr. Devereaux. Let's go right to Mr. Devereaux, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you. I thank the minister for the punt. Certainly, I appreciate the question. It's a fair question. I think part of the reason why Nunavut Housing Corporation's current surplus exists is, as mentioned, we had a few years where we did cancel some big tenders. What the corporation can advise members is we are absolutely burning money right now. We are spending big. In this past current year, that major contract with NCC was well in excess of

\$100 million, and then you tag on other major housing infrastructure projects that we advance, such as the modular units with SIBs and really, for the upcoming year, we hope to do that and more.

We know we are going to draw down very fast on any surpluses that built up over the last couple of years. Although we know, if you looked at our financials today, it looks like we have a lot of money there. We are very quickly, as we speak here today, expensing a lot of that money and when we advance some of the contracts that we want to.

Also, we have great indication that other players in the housing sector are trying to accelerate supply as well. The member mentioned about NCC putting out an RFP for modular units, so there is potentially an additional 100 to 130 units coming into the market. Some of those units, potentially if they turn into affordable housing units, may be looking for additional investments to make them more affordable. So we do believe we are going to expense money very fast this year and next year as we try to incentivize and push for accelerated housing supply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that, Mr. Devereaux. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For clarification I will be asking questions. It is to my understanding that the Nunavut Housing Corporation builds public housing units in communities depending on waiting lists.

My question is: when they do build public housing units in the communities, does the Nunavut Housing Corporation assure that the units being built, when completed, are allocated to Nunavummiut that are on the waiting list? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my first question.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: As far as we understand, yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On September 10, 2018 the federal and territorial governments announced a federal investment of almost \$12 million that will go towards energy efficient retrofits for Nunavut's public housing and the installation of new district heating systems in the communities of Sanikiluaq and Taloyoak. Through the Nunavut Housing Corporation, housing retrofits will include new insulation, weather stripping, window and door replacements, as well as hot water tanks and furnace upgrades. These projects will result in improved air quality and reduce maintenance costs and they will extend the life of almost 1,000 housing units. As of today, what is the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been waiting for a couple of days for something like this question to come up. I would really love

if you can Associate President, Mr. Pudluk, to respond, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I knew we would get Mr. Pudluk involved in here at some point. Please proceed.

Mr. Pudluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member, for the question. Just for clarification, is that the Low Carbon Economy Fund that you were mentioning?

Chairman: Thank you. I believe it is. It was a \$12 million federal announcement in the fall of 2018, and if I do recall, I believe it was that fund. Please proceed.

Mr. Pudluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker...oh, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry. Yes, the program is just about complete for this program for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. We had \$8 million of that \$12 million to complete, I think it was, a total of 462 units and there were three targets: windows and doors, hot water tanks, and boiler and furnace upgrades in multiple units in many communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. I have seen that work being done in my community and it's great.

My next question is: the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2023-24 capital estimates include \$7 million for mould assessment and remediation. As of today, how many assessments and remediation projects have been completed during the current 2023-24 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been a total of 58 in 13 communities, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the previous question from one of my colleagues about fire damage builds; I heard Taloyoak being mentioned. Can the minister elaborate about the builds in Taloyoak, what year, and what Taloyoakmiut will see during the build? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe Taloyoak is one that we're building right now during this fiscal year, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, minister, for your response. I'll be moving on to homeowners as my constituents, we have a lot of homeowners and they're requiring assistance.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of September 14, 2021, the creation of a new Renewable Energy Homeowner Grant Program was announced. Although information and application materials concerning the program are publicly available on the Nunavut Housing Corporation's website, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2024-25 substantiation sheet for its

homeownership programs does not make reference to the Renewable Energy Homeowner Grant Program.

Why does the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2024-25 substantiation sheet for its homeownership programs not make reference to the Renewable Energy Homeowner Grant Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your patience. I was just trying to confirm that the program is run by Environment and we work with that department to ensure that affected homeowners benefit from it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that, minister. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's homeownership program review report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2019. The report contained 18 formal recommendations. One of the recommendations was that the Nunavut Housing Corporation should "consolidate programs related to purchasing or building a home into a Homeownership Program; consolidate programs related to home repairs, maintenance, renovations into a Home Improvement Program." What actions is the Nunavut Housing Corporation taking to implement this recommendation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that issue, I've mentioned that we are working to put out a new suite of programs or revitalize some of them and we're going through that process right now, Mr. Chairman. I hope to be able to announce these new programs, that includes some of the concerns brought up by my colleague from Taloyoak in the release of the new programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be looking forward to my questions to the minister.

On June 1, 2020 the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued request for proposals Nunavut Construction Costs Review. The request for proposal closed on June 29, 2020. The final report from the review was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 16, 2021.

The report indicated that "In regards to programs such as NDAP which are designed to encourage private homeownership, we are of the opinion that the interest in such down payment assistance will not be significantly increased by changes to the details of this program. This is due to the negative aspects of private homeownership for personal use that exist in Nunavut that include high utility costs, relatively stagnant home resale prices, and high maintenance costs, among others." To what extent does the Nunavut Housing Corporation agree with this finding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are taking a look at some of the issues brought up in that comment and in that report, such as making changes to the Down Payment Assistance Program to see how we can make changes to it to be more effective and useful for those that would like to apply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. I have a lot of homeowners in both constituent communities of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk. The homeowners are always requesting help to retrofit their homes. How can my constituents ask for support? Do they go to the local housing organization or do they fill out applications? Where do they get the applications or who can assist them for retrofits for their homes? That will be my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very good question, Mr. Chairman. That's one of the areas that we talked about at length. When we're taking a look that the different programs that the Nunavut Housing Corporation does have, one of the concerns was that they are not user friendly. It was very hard for some people who don't have the ability or skills to evaluate how much it costs to replace a window, where to get it, and all those other details.

We are going to try to improve the application form from our website at Nunavut Housing Corporation, or you

could contact the local housing corporation within the regions or ask your housing association for assistance and we'll be more than happy to help the applicants.

In saying that, Mr. Chairman, we are hopeful that the new suite of programs, or the same programs in some cases, will be easier to access, more user friendly and understandable, to the point where we're even talking right now about having programs where we fly in, let's say, oil burner mechanics or furnace repairmen into communities so that they could do annual maintenance checks on some of the homeownership units and be more proactive that way amongst other things, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just have a few questions and its along the line of the questions that my colleague asked.

(interpretation) Though we are quite pleased with the funding allocated towards these programs specified for homeownership and down payment assistance, what we would like and I personally wish to understand myself, is on this new program entitled the Home Ownership Retrofit Program.

If I applied towards this program, does this entail having to provide additional information such as the listing of supplies required to undertake this retrofit work that will need changes? (interpretation ends) Would it be for only materials? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it could be used for either program or for both applications.

Some homeowners have carpentry skills required to be able to maintain their homes. There are people who are able to do the work if they desire to undertake this retrofit work themselves, and perhaps they could do that, so this is the direction towards both programs in the application form. If they wish to include that in their application, it is not limited just for materials nor just for the actual work itself. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you minister. I am happy to hear that, but if the program is for both of these categories, not every community has carpenters or electricians to do the retrofit work, so the expenses should include travel work expenses. I am aware that if they need to bring in professionals, then this should be added into the application form itself, such as the need to bring them in. Would these be included in the application form itself? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we are envisioning is that it is not everyone who has carpentry skills or the ability to undertake this work in many of our communities, so what she states is very true.

There are some communities without any professional carpenters or plumbers, and in those cases we would ensure that is considered when reviewing application forms and we would be able to identify that rather quickly. To use this example, if the community has a local contractor available within the North Baffin, and if there are applicants requiring help close by, then that would be included in the funding support.

Perhaps professional contractors could be flown to several communities to perform the work needing to be done so that all the homeowners could have professional done work through a contract. So this is an option. If the regions have skilled contractors, we can ask them to do the work within their area. If it were in the Kivalliq, it would require a different contractor.

That is what we envision within this program so that homeowners in all of the communities could be served since some communities do not have maintenance workers available. This is our goal and we want to setup a program that provides easier access to these services, as some homeowners have had to wait up to a year from the time of their application approval to the commencement of the contract. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the explanation.

This is just going to be a comment as I am very pleased that the department is working on these issues. Also, our local homeowners will have some

expectations of faster work services, especially our elderly or senior homeowners who can now apply for the maintenance work knowing that there will not be a long wait period from the time of their applications anymore. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Yes, Mr. Chairman, I agree with the member's comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation) Ms. Quassa, are you done? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take long. I'm just curious; when you receive answers and then you get curious. The bunkhouses that the Nunavut Housing Corporation has purchased and has in the communities, the minister stated that they're roughly \$500,000 turnkey in a community. I have seen the one in Arviat. It went fairly quickly and it's a fairly large. It's a good size. What is the square footage of the building, if his official might have that? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They're approximately 900 to 1,000 square feet; in those parameters. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then if you do the math, I

think it's roughly about \$500 a square foot for construction. If it's 1,000 square feet, that is a pretty good deal and I saw how quickly that it was put on site and ready for someone to come in there. If you can get a building that size for that price, why hasn't the housing corporation gone to that mode in terms of it's \$100 a square foot less, roughly, and it would be a detached unit, which Nunavummiut have been requesting. The housing corporation has only been building five-plexes generally, and now they're getting into eight-plexes and 12-plexes? Why not go that route? Square footage-wise, it seems to be cheaper. Thank you.

Chairman: Valid point. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, one of the things we're doing is taking a look at what my colleague also mentioned. NCC is putting out a request for proposals on a number of units, so we're keeping our ears to the ground and taking a very close look at this. It's definitely in the realm of possibilities that we have with the corporation, Mr. Chairman. We will keep an eye on this and see how it progresses and hopefully that may be one of the options that we do have.

Mr. Chairman, this just shows the realm of possibilities that we could now start exploring when we get into trying to find diverse ways of improving the housing market in our territory. I'm glad that my colleague observed that and it is in our scope, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's in the scope of the Nunavut Housing Corporation's possibilities, so I would like to see if it's in the scope of the housing corporation's possibilities too, that a number of these units would be purchased from the Sakku building factory that is being manufactured in Arviat and they will be making modular homes as soon as their plant is constructed. Are they looking at the possibility of buying these prefabricated units from Arviat? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that question. For sure, Mr. Chairman, if the price is right and the quality is there, it's definitely in the realm of possibilities. While we're talking about possibilities, we do want to support Nunavut, we do want to build Nunavut, and if they can do it at a price we're looking for, then it's most definitely possible, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I'll skip to something completely different here. Yesterday one of the members asked about the RFP for leasing staff housing units and the RFP went out about six months ago. The minister or official responded saying that they should have something on that in the first quarter. It has been quite a while and I presume when you put an RFP out, there's someone who's got a house who would say that they're willing to lease it to the government for staff housing. Why is it taking so long to get results from the

RFP to lease staff housing units within Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the process of leasing, putting out RFPs, and waiting for a response or finalizing it, if I could have Mr. Devereaux through you, Mr. Chairman, respond.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go ahead, Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Every year, the corporation does put out an RFP to see what is available out in the market for staff housing. We do that every spring. We evaluate submissions both on existing product that could be available, as well, if any proponents or landlords are talking about building new housing product. Then from that RFP, the following one, two, six, or eight months thereafter, as the staff housing needs change or we do require more units, we pull from that RFP.

The one from this year, for example, we would have done a few awards where we picked up some staff housing units. As you can appreciate, we manage a very large staff housing portfolio of approximately 1,800 units, and out of that 1,800, approximately 1,200 are leased units. Those leases expire over certain times and then we acquire new leases. So from that RFP, it's very much ongoing and we will draw from it throughout the year until the following spring when we reissue another RFP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The official said that they do it yearly. What's the average length of a lease for staff housing then from a business that you have to do it yearly? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It varies a lot and depends a lot on the landlord, but on the average, about five-year leases. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going on to a different topic, the wait-lists, I know it was asked and the same response was that they should have a new waitlist by the first quarter, which is quite a ways away, and I know that they have been looking at how to change the waitlist so it's not just strictly on the number of applications applying for public housing units. The minister did state that currently, they want to give some houses to every community regardless of the wait-list, it seems. So if the minister could just explain what other factors may go into the wait-list other than just the number of applicants in a community that have applied for a public housing unit. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: If I understand the question correctly, there could be a number of factors to be put on the wait-list. Some of them include that you will

be losing the housing unit that you are in. If it's not a public housing unit, it might be a staff house or a rental house that you're in. You might be applying to get into the unit. You might be trying to get into a unit because you're moving into that community or that you have a family and you would like to move out of the current situation that you're in, that there is overcrowding in your unit, and the list goes on, Mr. Chairman, but those are the common reasons for people getting onto the wait-list.

Now, some communities have different criteria for grading the waitlist. Being an elder gives you a certain number of points and being new to the community gives you fewer points compared to someone who has been on the list longer. There's a whole smorgasbord of points that are scored through this wait-list system. What we would like to do in the next couple of months is to take a look at what works, what doesn't work, and try to get one that works across the territory, because right now there are so many little differences. Having debt in another community's housing association also loses you points, and so on.

We're trying to come up with something that is simple, understandable, more user-friendly and effective. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: If I could just tack onto Mr. Savikataaq's question, how many points does an applicant get with a letter of reference from their Member of the Legislative Assembly? Minister Kusugak.

>> *Laughter*

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I don't have a clue. As far as I know, you don't get extra points and if you're getting a letter of reference, you shouldn't be, but I believe there are no extra points for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for clarifying that, minister. I'm sure all of us, at some point, have been asked to provide that. I know we do lobby the minister. I have been doing it myself on a number of occasions, but thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you and just a couple more here; I'm almost done. I asked the minister about the Inuit employment level with the NCC and the construction is just starting. Will the minister commit to writing to the committee, I would say, by the winter sitting or before the winter sitting, on the employment rates of the NCC per community and the communities that they are working in? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For sure and I would like to also follow myself, as the minister, to see where it rises and it decreases throughout the work. The construction year will fluctuate and we will try to keep a close eye on that with ourselves and the contractor, and I will be more than happy to report on those levels, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Apologies, Mr. Savikataaq. Typically, in the past, when contracts were being dealt, especially at a per community, with labour market analyses of communities' labour market availability, there have been different

percentages and conditions on different contracts. The minister mentioned earlier 30 percent. Is that a blanket across all communities? I would just like to get that clarification before I get back to Mr. Savikataaq. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I should have asked this earlier when I was talking about the replacement units and the money that goes into there. We never want any house to go on fire, whether it's a public housing unit or someone else's house, but just so we would have a better picture, in 2023-24, and I know it's not over, how many public housing units have been on fire, just so we will have a better picture? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have the details on that for this current year, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. That's the last name I have on my list. Do members agree that we have concluded with the Nunavut Housing Corporation? Sorry, my apologies. Nunavut Housing Corporation. Total Capital Expenditures. \$82,669,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Now do members agree that we have concluded with the Nunavut Housing Corporation?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any closing comments, minister?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I truly enjoy having this discussion every time I'm sitting here and I apologize if I get a little too excited sometimes, but it comes with the nature of the way I work.

I appreciate all the questions I have and there were some really good ideas and questions and comments from my colleagues. I know that we have been taking notes on them. We will follow through on them. We have a commitment, I believe, to keep this Assembly informed in terms of where we are going with the housing corporation. I think it is a positive one. Yes, we could be faster, but I think we are headed down the right path. I want to take a moment to thank the housing associations and organizations' board of directors across Nunavut that work tirelessly. They get a lot of complaints and people at their doors saying they need housing and they need to do better. They are trying, Mr. Chairman, to do the best that they can. I applaud them for giving their time to be able to try to do what they can to help housing.

We have some terrific staff at the housing corporation. We have staff that have been there up to 40 years, 20 years, 30 years. It just shows the kind of devoted staff we have across the territory within the corporation and the local associations. I couldn't applaud them enough and I appreciate your questions and the great work that our head office is

doing and the housing corporation board.
Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, minister.
Yourself and your witnesses can exit the witness table and we are going to take a very, very short break and get ready for the next department, so we will say two or three minutes. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 17:11 and resumed at 17:19*

**Bill 31 – Appropriation (Capital) Act,
2024-2025 – Economic
Development and Transportation
– Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. First, I would like to ask Minister Akeeagok: do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the minister to have officials appear before us?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed. Thank you. Please introduce your officials and proceed directly into your opening comments, minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is my Deputy Minister David Kunuk, and on my left is John Hawkins,

Assistant Deputy Minister. In the gallery, we have an alternate; Jacqueline Curley, Associate Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Transportation in Rankin Inlet.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very pleased to be here to review the Department of Economic Development and Transportation's capital estimates for 2024-25 with the Committee of the Whole, and to answer any questions the members may have.

The largest portion of the department's capital expenditures is for our airports, which are critical in providing safe and efficient connections between our communities and the rest of the world.

(interpretation ends) As the members are aware, the National Trade Corridors Fund has provided funding for most of the major projects in this plan. The largest part of this funding is for new airport terminal buildings in Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Naujaat, Whale Cove, Kugluktuk, and Kimmirut.

Construction contracts for all of these projects have now been awarded. The projects are currently under construction, and are all progressing well. In fact, Mr. Chairman, two of these projects, Kugluktuk and Kimmirut, are progressing so quickly that we will need to advance funding from 2024 into the current fiscal year.

That request is part of the capital supplementary appropriation bill before the members in this session. The adjustments do not require additional funding – they simply advance expenditures from next fiscal year into the current one.

The National Trade Corridors Fund is also contributing \$30 million towards airport equipment shelters for Arviat, Gjoa Haven, Grise Fiord, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, Pond Inlet, and Taloyoak. The Department of Community and Government Services has nearly completed the planning phase for these seven projects. In 2024, we are requesting \$3.5 million to advance these projects into engineering design.

Mr. Chairman, through the National Trade Corridors Fund, we have also secured funds for marine infrastructure in Qikiqtarjuaq. The engineering design contract for that project was recently awarded, and will be proceeding through the next year.

Mr. Chairman, maintaining our airports also requires that we have reliable mobile equipment, and efficient and safe airport facilities. We do this through two projects: First, the Transportation Equipment and Facilities project, is for heavy equipment and facility upgrades, where each piece costs more than \$250 thousand dollars. This fund is primarily used to purchase heavy equipment. For 2024-25 we propose funding to purchase the following airport equipment:

- A plow truck for Gjoa Haven
- A front-end loader for Arviat
- Loader mounter snow blowers for:
 - Sanirajak
 - Pond Inlet
 - Kimmirut
 - Gjoa Haven

The second project, Small Capital, is for expenditures less than \$250,000. We are requesting funds to buy three pieces of equipment, including:

- Runway inspection vehicles for Grise Fiord and Pangnirtung; and
- An airport runway sander for Rankin Inlet.

The small capital projects also include funding for lifecycle renovations of our facilities and for studies to initiate and develop capital projects.

Mr. Chairman, this budget also includes funding for the Iqaluit International Airport improvements. The government has continuing obligations throughout the 30-year agreement, and the capital expenditures detailed in this year's plan include a plow attachment and lifecycle upgrades to the information technology systems.

Mr. Chairman, my department also has a role in developing marine infrastructure in our communities. These capital estimates include funding to make minor improvements and lifecycle repairs to docks, boat launches, and breakwaters across Nunavut under the small craft harbours budget. This funding will be made available under contribution agreements, allowing communities to undertake work on priority projects they have identified.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this plan is in line with the department's mandate as we continue to strengthen partnerships with the federal government, industry, and our communities to ensure that the investments we make in Nunavut have a lasting impact on safety and on the economic and social future of our territory.

(interpretation) I will be glad to answer any questions from my fellow members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments to provide? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: 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 2024-25 Capital Estimates of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

The department's proposed capital budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year is \$43,849,000. In recent years, a number of important transportation infrastructure projects have received funding under the federal National Trade Corridors Fund, including renovation and expansion of the Rankin Inlet Airport Terminal Building and the construction of new airport terminal buildings in the communities of Chesterfield Inlet, Kimmirut, Kugluktuk, Nauyasat, and Whale Cove. Members are pleased that tenders for the construction of the five new airport terminal buildings have been awarded.

On August 9, 2021 the federal Minister of Transport announced \$30 million in funding for a project to construct "new shelters to house heavy equipment essential for air operations, and to store cargo in the communities of Arviat, Kugaaruk, Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, Kugluktuk, Pond Inlet and Grise Fiord." The announcement indicated that the project "involves the construction of seven shelters to be leased to private sector carriers and operators in these communities." Members look forward to further clarification on the proposed leasing agreements.

On October 18, 2019 the Government of Nunavut issued a request for proposals for a "Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study." Funding for this important work was provided through the federal Oceans Protection Plan. Information published by the government indicates that Worley Canada Services was the successful proponent. Members continue to look forward to the results of this study being tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of other departmental applications under the Oceans Protection Plan.

On August 4, 2021 the federal Minister of Transport announced \$40 million in funding towards the construction of a new deep-water port in Qikiqtarjuaq. This project has the potential to support Nunavut's fishing sector. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this major project. Members encourage the department to work closely with other entities, including the Municipality of Qikiqtarjuaq and the Qulliq Energy Corporation, to identify future operations and maintenance costs associated with the new infrastructure.

On August 13, 2019 the federal Minister of Transport announced funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund for a number of projects, including the study and design of an intercommunity all-season road in the Kivalliq and installation of passenger boarding ramps at seven airports. In June 2022 the Legislative Assembly approved \$1.5 million in capital carryover funding for the Kivalliq Trade Corridor Study. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this important initiative.

The spring 2017 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to Parliament included a chapter titled “Civil Aviation Infrastructure in the North.” One of the Auditor General’s recommendations was that the federal Department of Transport should “lead the development of a long-term strategy for northern airport infrastructure. The strategy should clearly outline the role that Transport Canada will play in addressing the infrastructure needs of remote northern airports.” The federal government’s response to this recommendation was that Transport Canada will “work with territorial governments and other federal government departments and stakeholders to identify shared priorities for northern transportation infrastructure, including, but not limited to, northern airports.” Members continue to encourage the minister to provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly concerning its work with Transport Canada in this area.

On March 10, 2023 the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation tabled the *Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update: 2020-2040*. The 2018-2021 business plan of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation indicated that one of its ongoing priorities was to “...complete planning work for remediation and removal of decommissioned airport terminal buildings” in a number of communities. This work has not yet been completed in Qikiqtarjuaq, Coral Harbour, Nanisivik, or Resolute Bay. Recognizing that there may be a lack of jurisdictional clarity with respect to responsibility for certain facilities, members continue to encourage the minister to publicly

clarify the department’s schedule for the decommissioning of the buildings that have not yet been remediated and removed.

The department’s Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy was revised in February 2023 and “sunsets” on March 31, 2027. Schedule A of the policy details departmental support for “access roads and community marine infrastructure,” while Schedule B details departmental support for “community marine infrastructure capital projects.” Schedule B was formerly referred to as “small craft harbour contributions.” The 2020-21 annual report on the administration of the program was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 7, 2023. The 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports have not yet been tabled. Members look forward to the ongoing and timely tabling of departmental annual reports on the administration of this important program.

The department’s proposed 2024-25 capital estimates also include funding for Economic Development Facilities Lifecycle improvements. Members look forward to ongoing updates on work undertaken through this funding.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2024-25 Capital Estimates of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Are there any general comments to the opening comments? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just two comments that I

would like to make and one thing that I have been asking repeatedly over the years is to have the substantiation sheets fully completed, including the incremental O&M, which is in Part C and Part 2 of the substantiation sheets. I do note that I think only one of the substantiation sheets includes the incremental operating costs, but the others which are in the construction phase, which includes a class “A” cost estimate, do not include those incremental O&M costs. I would just like to put forward another recommendation that all substantiation sheets be fully completed, especially when they’re in the class “A” cost estimate.

Another recommendation that I have been putting forward repeatedly in the past is when projects are in that construction phase in class “A” estimates, that imagery be included, whether it be a floor plan or a conceptual design of the exterior of the building, just to give us an idea of what it is we’re actually voting on. I do note that one of the substantiation sheets does include that and I think it’s the Rankin Inlet air terminal expansion, but I just want to put forward another recommendation that going forward in the future, construction projects in the class “A” phase cost estimate phase include some sort of conceptual image for us to give us a better understanding of what these million of dollars we’re actually voting on is for.

It’s just those recommendations as comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for raising that again, Mr. Lightstone. I know that it has been previously raised and I think it

would be very helpful to the committee to be able to visualize the projects. Any other general comments to the opening comments? Seeing none, I’ll go to the first name on my list. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister Akeeagok, as well as your officials.

My first question is regarding the minister’s opening comments. (interpretation ends) His department is also developing marine infrastructure in our communities. Can he clarify which community they are? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I tried to highlight every community. Can he refer me to specifically which paragraph we’re in? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It’s on the bottom of page 3 and the top of page 4. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The one that’s referring to my department’s role on marine infrastructure. These are application based that any community can apply for and that’s why we don’t have a list of communities. For 2024-25 we will be putting out a call letter asking communities to submit their requests

through this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Just to remind members; I apologize, we are on page K-3. Transportation. \$43,099,000. Mr. Malliki, please proceed.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Last year, in 2022, there was a feasibility study in both of my constituencies regarding marine infrastructure. I forgot the name of that consultant. Did that consulting firm reach the minister's office? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through the Oceans Protection Plan we asked for and received funding to do marine infrastructure for every community, and that work was done. The consultant that was hired visited the majority of the communities. That work that has been done, we are now taking that to try and advance for more funding requests through our federal partners and we are targeting the Oceans Protection Plan, which are 100 percent federally funded projects. That is the intent that we used for the marine scoping study. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the communities that I represent, which is Naujaat, doesn't have any marine infrastructure. I want both of my communities that I represent to be on the

top of the list for marine infrastructure. Can the minister agree with me on that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The purpose of that marine scoping was to start identifying which communities should be priority. We haven't gotten to that level yet, but I'm happy that the draft is done and we will be reviewing that this winter, but we are going to use each of those communities to try and get more safe harbours through this initiative.

I'm relying on the federal government's program to build these and that is why we haven't put it in our capital plans yet, but every community is wanting to see something safe, reliable, as we have started seeing communities like Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, and Pond Inlet having been completed. I want to see more of that. I want to see every community receive that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The minister didn't answer my question. In that regard, is there a timeline when the federal minister will let the minister know that there are going to be projects coming forward for marine infrastructure. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I answered his question. He asked if his two communities can be made top priority. I said that every community is a priority to us. I just wanted to make that clarification that I did provide that response.

As for the Oceans Protection Plan, they go through a call letter and we received a call letter almost a year ago now and we submitted up to 10 projects; some of them were community-led. We have not heard back from the federal government yet on those funding requests, but we are anticipating that it's coming. It's one that we have been impatiently waiting for a response from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for that good response. (interpretation ends) I want to move on to community runways. As the minister is aware, in speaking with Calm Air, the airline carrier in the Kivalliq, they have raised the issue of having too short a runway that limited the cargo carried to the community. Are there any talks on getting the runway extended? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to applaud the committee, and in particular the chairman, that read the committee's opening comments. In there, it is stressed to Transport Canada that the

Airports Capital Assistance Program has a northern component to it. I continue to advocate that with my colleague and the new minister, who I met as recently as last week, almost two weeks ago already. I continue to stress that there should be a northern portion.

The Airports Capital Assistance Program that the federal government has does either extensions or resurfacing of runways. That's a very good program that the federal government has and I would like to see more and more of that to the communities. If and when there is a need of an extension, those are the discussions that we have in terms of which pot of money we would try to get at. Typically with my department, when it comes to the extensions and resurfacing, I rely on that program, and fixing up the lighting and that.

If your community or if any of the communities are identified that there is a weight restriction for airlines, we would like to be aware of that and we know that a number of our communities are in that situation. It costs more to deliver when you can't deliver your whole cargo. I acknowledge the member's comments on this and appreciate the committee's work leading up to this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When I was the mayor of Nauyasat, I pushed really hard for the Nauyasat runway to be extended. As the minister is aware, it's pretty close to the community and it won't take much if there's a crash in town to hit the houses. That's one of the things that were raised

from my council and I really want this minister to really push for an extension or a new runway for the community.

Those are the only questions I had. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the work that you did as a mayor and now as a member of this legislature. Some of the airports that were built before our time are a bit difficult to either extend, or now, to relocate is too difficult.

I believe that Naujaat's extension of the airstrip was studied and there are some things that are in the way that are beyond some of our control, but it's one that has been identified and listed. I think, for the relocations in our 20-year plan, we singled out Pangnirtung and Kimmirut as the possible two to renovate. Until I am able to find over \$100 million for the relocation of airstrips, we're living with what we currently have right now and it's sometimes not acceptable, but it's a reality that we live in.

I hear your concerns with your community and we will continue to seek different avenues to help fund this very expensive but very much needed within our territory. Thanks for raising that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I do recall this topic coming up a number of times over my tenure in this building and I think it's only like a hundred feet or something like that that gets it to the next class of

airplanes that are available to land on that runway, but Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move that we report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not subject to debate. All those in favour. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Oh, sorry, again.

>> *Laughter*

Witnesses, you can depart the witness table, please.

Speaker: Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 31 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: Is there a seconder? Mr. Savikataaq.

>> *Laughter*

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. There are none. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Just a reminder that there is a meeting of the Full Caucus at nine o'clock in the Nanuq Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for October 26:

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 31

- Bill 32
- Bill 33
- Bill 35
- Bill 36
- Tabled Document 1 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 73 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 120 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 163 – 6(2)

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Thursday, October 26, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House adjourned at 17:55*

