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November 17, 2021

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Kate White, MLA Takhini-Kopper King, Leader Yukon NDP  
Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

**Re: Change of clause 94, Division 4, Bill No.8: Worker's Safety and Compensation Act**

Dear MLA White,

We are writing in support of your efforts to make changes to the government of Yukon's proposed Bill No. 8 regarding the Worker's Safety and Compensation Act.

At Yukon First Nations Wildfire, the health, safety, and wellness of our first responders is of the utmost importance. Climate change is prolonging our fire seasons in the Yukon and Canada and increasing the intensity of wildfires, forcing Yukon wildland firefighters to work more hours during increasing longer seasons. They are also encountering more wildland-urban interface situations than ever before while working across the Territory and the country. This is increasing their exposure to harmful, carcinogenic substances found in both wood smoke from wildfires and smoke from fires affecting structures in wildland-urban interface settings. A 2019 study published in the journal *Environmental Research*, Volume 173 showed that wildland firefighters are at an increased risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease mortality. We believe that those risking their lives to serve their communities should in turn be supported by their communities and that legislation should be in place to ensure that they have that support.

If a wildland forest firefighter is diagnosed with a form of cancer directly resulting from their engagement as a wildland forest firefighter and no evidence to the contrary is shown, this disease should be presumed to be a work-related injury. Consistent with legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions, the wildland firefighter should be entitled to the compensation and support afforded to all other firefighters in the Yukon, as outlined by Division 4 of the Worker's Safety and Compensation Act.

Yukon First Nations Wildfire supports changing clause 94 on page 76 of the proposed Bill No. 8: Worker's Safety and Compensation Act by removing the words "but does not include" and replacing it with "or a part-time or fulltime", assuring that wildland firefighters are covered in this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chad Thomas'.

Chad Thomas  
CEO