Yukon Legislative Assembly

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DRAFT
BLUES

Tuesday, November 24, 2026 — 1:00 p.m.

Whitehorse, Yukon

Speaker: The Honourable Yvonne Clarke

NOTE

This document, referred to as the “Blues”, is the preliminary issue of the Hansard of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and has not been edited fully. It may be used as a reference only with the understanding that it will be superseded by the final, edited version, entitled “Hansard”, at a later time.

Draft Segment 002-056

Draft Segment 002-017

Draft Segment 002-012

Tuesday, November 24, 2026

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the Daily Routine, the Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper.

Motion No. 211, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek North; and Motion No. 214, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale North, have both been withdrawn as they are now outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Visitors introduced

Unanimous consent for Tributes to exceed 20 minutes

Hon. Scott Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3 and notwithstanding Standing Order 11(6), I request the unanimous consent of the House for the time allotted for the rubric Tributes to exceed 20 minutes.

Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3 and notwithstanding Standing Order 11(6), the Government House Leader has requested the unanimous consent of the House for the time allotted for the rubric Tributes to exceed 20 minutes.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has been granted.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Kerry Huff

Hon. Ted Laking: I rise today to pay tribute to Kerry Huff, a respected educator, mentor, and community leader whose impact continues to be felt across the Yukon. Kerry passed away on August 2, 2026, at the age of 74. While his passing is a loss for his family, friends, and colleagues, it is also a loss felt by generations of Yukon students whose lives were shaped by his guidance, enthusiasm, encouragement, and leadership.

Born and raised in Swan River, Manitoba, Kerry began his teaching career in 1975 before moving to the Yukon with his family in 1988. He began teaching at Porter Creek Junior Secondary School and went on to serve as vice-principal before becoming principal of Porter Creek Secondary School. He remained in that role until his retirement in 2009. Beyond his work in schools, Kerry also served three years as president of the Yukon Teachers' Association and one year as vice-president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

But if you want a more personal introduction that goes far beyond the resumé to truly know what it was like to work with and meet Kerry, I think this quote from teacher and former colleague Paul MacDonald sums it up best: "I first met Kerry when I was a young teacher working in Teslin. We were told that the president of the Yukon Teachers' Association was coming to visit, and I remember expecting someone fairly official, perhaps wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase. Instead, I walked into the staff room and found Kerry stretched out on that couch, completely relaxed, and chatting with everyone as though he'd been there for years." That's a perfect summary of the laid-back and calm approach that Kerry had to educating, to working with staff, and to developing relationships with students. I was lucky to have Mr. Huff, or Huff Daddy, as he was affectionately known to so many students, as my principal while I was a student at PCSS.

Throughout his career, Kerry believed education was about much more than academics. He believed in building relationships, supporting students, and helping young people recognize and seize their potential. Those who worked alongside him describe a principal who always put students first, and I can personally verify this because — and I know it's going to be a shock to everybody in this room — I spent a lot of time in the principal's office. He was known for supporting new ideas, encouraging staff, and creating opportunities that would benefit students and strengthen school communities.

His leadership was recognized beyond the Yukon as well. In 2004, *Maclean's* magazine, in The Grade School Project, named Porter Creek Secondary School one of Canada's best high schools, and Kerry was recognized for his leadership as principal. To quote from the opening of that article, "Despite his 29 years as an educator, Kerry Huff, principal of Porter Creek Secondary School in Whitehorse, has never completely grown up, and he's proud of it." Perhaps that's why he and I and so many of his students got along so well.

In recently reviewing that article again, I found myself smiling as I read stories of his time as principal. In that article is a story of the accomplishments of Porter Creek Secondary School's volleyball team that year and the unusual motivation he provided to the teams if they performed well. That year, he challenged all the students that for each gold medal they won, he would eat a worm. Well, the motivation appeared to have worked, because by the end of the season, Mr. Huff had eaten five worms. He even went a step further and had committed to getting a tattoo of the school mascot if they won a sixth gold medal. Unfortunately, the team never ended up getting that sixth gold medal, and he was spared from the tattoo. But in the words of Paul MacDonald, who was the coach that year, "I think he secretly really wanted that tattoo and was just looking for an excuse to get it."

Another story that stands out from Kerry's time as principal is one that many students experienced at PCSS. It is a quote from former Porter Creek Secondary student Lindsay Birrs, who said, "At my grad, we were allowed to pick our guest speaker, and we picked him. All the students were so close with him, especially my class. When he went up there, he told little stories about all of us." To those of us who were his students, that's not a surprise at all. Mr. Huff took the time to know all his students and develop a relationship with us. He truly made you feel connected to the school and to your education.

Beyond students, though, his colleagues also have many fond memories of their time working with him. Those who worked with him recall his common sense and practical approach to educating. In fact, a common thread through all the stories is that as a leader, he believed in letting his teachers teach and try their own things to help their students rather than micromanage them.

Teacher and former colleague of Kerry's, Trevor Hale, remembered that Kerry's willingness to support good ideas never changed. To quote from Trevor, "One of the things I always appreciated about Kerry was that whenever you went to him with an idea that was going to be good for the kids, his answer was pretty much always yes. It didn't really matter if the idea was a little outside the box or something the Department of Education might not be thrilled about. Kerry was willing to give it a shot. During the first half of his time as principal, he'd say, 'Sure, if they get mad at me, I'll just play dumb and say, "Sorry, I'm new to the job."'" Trevor went on to recall that later, as retirement approached, Kerry's answers wouldn't change. He just modified the excuse. "During the second half of his time as principal, he'd say, 'Sure, if they get mad at me, I'll just say, "Oh well, I'm almost retired. Let's not worry about it."'

Behind all the humour was a principal who took responsibility, supported his staff, and put students first. He trusted and empowered those around him, supported their efforts, and never lost sight of what mattered most, fostering a strong and supportive learning environment for all. Kerry was equally well known for the warmth and humour he brought to his work. Former students will fondly remember his trademark red licorice, his ever-changing collection of neckties, and his habit of greeting everyone with "morning" at any time of day. As former colleague Paul MacDonald recalled, whether it was 8:30 in the morning or 2:30 in the afternoon, Kerry's greeting was always the same: "morning." These small but genuine gestures helped create a welcoming, relaxed environment and reflected the interest he took in the people around him. When Kerry retired, he promised students who were still attending Porter Creek Secondary that he would return for their graduation, and true to his word, he came back year after year to celebrate those milestones with them. And that commitment spoke to the kind of educator and human being he was, and the lasting professional and personal relationships he built through his career.

Through Kerry's leadership roles, he helped support educators and strengthened public education both in the Yukon and across Canada. For many people, Kerry will be remembered not only for the positions he held, but for the way he made others feel valued, heard, supported, and respected. One of the quotes Kerry kept on the wall in his office reflected the philosophy that guided his life and work. The anonymous quote read, "One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, what sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child." In 2004, former Premier Pat Duncan referenced that very quote in this Assembly and observed that Kerry did not simply read those words, but that he walks the talk and he lives it.

In preparation for this tribute, I reached out to Pat, who is now Yukon's Senator, to get a bit more flavour for who Kerry was, and she shared a beautiful story about that specific quote. Quote: "Kerry gave me a card with that quote when I sought his advice about seeking office as his MLA. Those who know me will recognize my fondness for paper and keeping notes. The card with that quote was Kerry's approach to life and his advice. And his legacy is more than keeping the card; it is the inspiration that Kerry left us with in trying to live up to that each day as he did."

I would like to just quickly share a couple of personal stories about my experiences during my time as a student of Huff Daddy. One school assembly many moons ago, PCSS had been conducting a fundraiser. Kerry, as always, was front and centre and supportive of school efforts. On this particular day, the way we were raising funds was by auctioning off the ability to pie Mr.

Huff. Now, a lot of the story is probably rightfully lost to the mists of time, but on that particular day, I somehow won the auction and the honour of pieing him in the face. Now there is a photo of this that, for some time, was hanging up in the principal's office, and the details here will sound a little strange, but for some reason, I may have been dressed up as a giant McDonald's milkshake. I won't try to explain the what, the why, or the who, but I think the fact that we would do something that silly and then it would later be proudly displayed on the wall in his office says a lot about how Mr. Huff understood the importance of bringing the lighter side of things to school.

I'll just finish it off with one more. I'm no stranger to elections, but one I am most proud of was during my graduation year. Our grad class did a vote where they selected students most likely to become a doctor, most likely to be a movie star, and so on. One of those awards was "most likely to be the next Huff Daddy", and I was always very proud to have been selected unanimously for that honour.

In closing, the measure of a great educator is seen and felt in the lives they influence, and by that measure, Kerry's legacy is legendary. Generations of Yukoners carry forward lessons they learned from him, encouragement he offered, and the consistent example he set.

On behalf of all Yukoners, I extend sincere condolences to his wife, Jill Mason, his children, Jennifer and Jason, his grandchildren, extended family, friends, former students, and colleagues. I thank Kerry Huff for his decades of service to Yukon students, educators, and communities. His contributions will not be forgotten.

Kate White: I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition in celebration of the life and legacy of Kerry Huff. Of course, I thank my colleague for his kind words and the enthusiasm of the crowd because there's going to be so many more opportunities to stand and clap.

Kerry was a loving husband, father, and a grandfather, and a most excellent friend. He was a lifelong learner, a believer in second chances, an educator, a principal, and so much more. He made an impact in and out of schools.

I was not one of the lucky students who experienced Huff Daddy in his many years at Porter Creek Secondary School, but I know that he made a difference. His ability to see the good in everyone, to produce a pun for any situation, his love of red licorice, and the size and diversity of his school tie collection are the stories of legend. Kerry believed that a school community was a "we" project, and that every teacher, staff member, student, and family had a role to play toward its success. Kerry was a doer, so he led by example. He met people where they were, interested in lifting them up to where they wanted to go. He treated his students with respect and was in turn respected by them. He understood that mistakes shouldn't define a young person, and he gave his students the grace to try again, often more than once. I feel really lucky to have stumbled upon the legendary hockey pool with some of his friends here in attendance today. I was told that Kerry was enthusiastic. He loved picking players from the Winnipeg Jets — we know how that's going right now. He never took himself too seriously. Unfortunately for him, that love and enthusiasm didn't really translate to his success in the hockey pool. In this season, a team was made in his honour, and I was told that his team is currently in the top spot, which is incredible.

I appreciate that the member also shared this quote because I also found it in Premier Duncan's notes. I'll say it again. "One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, what sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child." He lived by that. Kerry was a great dad. That's plain to see through his children, Jennifer, who followed her dad into education and is a vice-principal in Fort McMurray, and Jason, who right now is probably flying between Vancouver and Chicago. Jason told me that his dad's legacy is more than just being a great dad, but in the 10,000 other kids, many of whom continue to help the Yukon thrive today. Jason is right; that's something to be proud of.

We thank you for the life and legacy of Kerry Huff and for sharing him with so many.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal caucus to pay tribute to beloved Whitehorse educator Kerry Huff.

Described by his former students as a legend, Mr. Huff is part of many a Porter Creek student's high school memory.

Born and raised in Swan River, Manitoba, Kerry began his teaching career in 1975 at Major Pratt School in Russell, Manitoba. In 1988, he and his family moved north to the Yukon, where he began a long and storied career at Porter Creek Secondary School, where he worked until his retirement in 2009. That is 21 years at the same school, first as a teacher, then vice-principal, and then eventually principal.

It's no wonder that generations of Yukon students hold such happy memories of Mr. Huff, or, as his students like to call him, Huff Daddy. He kissed pigs, shaved his hair into a mohawk, and even moonlighted as a sumo wrestler. His upbeat personality always made people feel welcome. He wore colourful ties, a different one for each day of the year. Upon his retirement, he said that he hoped to never wear another tie again, or to get up early. He was also known for a never-ending supply of red licorice. At one time, a group of his students even gifted him with a licorice tie that he had framed and hanging in the school office. These are some of the lasting memories that students had of him, as well as his signature greeting of "mornin'", no matter what time of day it was.

His impact in education went beyond the halls of Porter Creek Secondary. He also served as president of the Yukon Teachers' Association and vice-president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, where he advocated for teachers as well as for students. He was recognized nationally in Maclean's magazine for his work as a school principal.

Kerry was also a loving husband and father. He loved photography and travelling, and he never lost that sense of humour, kindness, and enthusiasm for life for which he was so well known. In my reading for this tribute, I came across so many lovely memories that people had shared. The common theme was one of kindness and compassion, but there was one memory that stood out to me, and I would like to close with it. In quotation: "Kerry was the one beacon of empathy, compassion, and decency that held us together. He was a wonderful human."

I think that is such a beautiful way to be remembered. I send my condolences to his family and to his children, grandchildren, friends, colleagues, and former students.

In remembrance of Ken Bolton

Lane Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to the life of Ken Bolton. Ken lived a busy, passionate, creative life, and it's an honour to pay tribute to him today. I'll admit it was daunting to write a tribute for someone who is as talented with words as Ken was, and I'm grateful to his wife Lee for taking the time to help me. Her stories of Ken painted a picture of a man who vibrated with energy, who deeply loved his country, who advocated fiercely for the rights of working people, and who brought enthusiasm and passion to everything he did.

Ken is survived by his wife, Sharolyn Lee, his sisters, Margaret and Patricia, his children, Geoff, Sarah, Hillary, Rachel, and Robin, several of whom I believe are listening on the radio right now. Thank you to them for joining us virtually today, and to the folks in the gallery for joining us as well.

The first thing to know about Ken is he was Canadian to his core. Over his life, he lived and worked in nearly every province and territory, gathering stories and understanding that he poured into his writing. He loved travelling the country and did so countless times — on one particularly memorable occasion, by bicycle. At that particular time, he was a young man living in Ontario, but his future first wife was in Winnipeg, so he hopped on a bike and cycled all the way over to court her. That trip was emblematic of the way he approached life. He would have an idea, and off he would go, and what a ride it would be.

Ken worked in journalism from coast to coast, including hosting a TV show in Prince Edward Island and writing stories for news outlets in Edmonton, Winnipeg, BC, and the Yukon — I'm confident that is not a complete list of places he worked. Yukoners will remember him as the editor of *What's Up Yukon* and as the writer of the column "Dear Ed" that drew on his deep and wide knowledge of Canada.

Ken was passionate about words. Close enough for jazz was not close enough for Ken. When it came to words, they had to be right. His colleagues knew that if something wasn't up to snuff, he would send it back to be redone, and that when he finally said it was good enough, it was something they would all be proud of.

Ken was deeply engaged in politics from a young age and fiercely believed in defending the rights of working people. He was involved with the NDP everywhere he lived and ran for office more than once in his life, starting in Ontario when he was just 24 years old. Here in the Yukon, he won the NDP nomination and then proudly ran in the 2008 federal election. He worked for the Yukon NDP caucus office for many years, championing causes like union solidarity and a living wage. The Member for Takhini remembers meeting him when she first ran in 2006 and says she was immediately charmed by the, in her words, "chain-smoking, style-guide-wielding newspaperman." After the election was over, he was one of only three people who heard the Member for Takhini say that even though she lost, she thought she would run again, and it's thanks to that commitment she made to him and the other people in the room that we have her here leading the Official Opposition today.

Ken's energy and passion could not be limited to his work life. He was very involved in theatre, in roles from writing to acting to volunteering as a board member. He used comedy to take political topics that, while very important, can only be considered dry even by people like me — but Ken could make these topics not just educational but entertaining. For example, he once wrote and performed a one-man show about the founding of the Workers' Compensation Board, complete with outfit changes for each of the characters, all of which were played by him.

He acted in plays at the Nakai Theatre and the Guild, which is where he met his wife Lee, or as she described herself to me, the fourth Mrs. Bolton. They bonded over their shared love of theatre, though in all their years performing and writing and directing, somehow they never actually did a show together.

One of the things people remember best about Ken is his humour. It was often very dark, but people loved it, and he kept it right until the end. When he was diagnosed with cancer near the end of his life, he used it as fodder for a stand-up comedy routine, and he talked his stepdaughter into sewing him a shroud that he could take with him when he travelled, as he said, just in case.

Ken lived a busy and storied life, packing every single year chock-full of ideas, community love, and adventure. He was not one to stay put or stay still, but of all the many places he lived, he stayed in Whitehorse the longest. We're lucky and grateful that he did. We offer our sincere condolences to the family, friends, and community members who are missing Ken. He leaves behind a world that is richer, fairer, funnier, and I would venture to say, better edited, because he was here.

Hon. Scott Kent: Today, I would like to recognize the life and contributions of Ken Bolton, a writer, journalist, performer, and storyteller whose words helped capture the character of the Yukon and the people who call it home. I would also like to thank Mark and Tammy Beese from What's Up Yukon for their tribute to Ken, and many of those words will form the tribute that I'm delivering here today.

Ken passed away on April 13, 2026, leaving behind a remarkable body of work and a lasting impression on countless readers, colleagues, and friends. Over the course of a long and varied career, he worked in journalism, politics, communications and the performing arts. Yet no matter the role, storytelling remained at the centre of his work.

After arriving in the Yukon, Ken became a familiar voice in the territory's cultural and community life. Through his writing, he documented local events, celebrated artists and performers, explored everyday Yukon experiences, and shared the stories that might otherwise have gone untold. For over two decades, his articles appeared in What's Up Yukon, where he helped shape not only the publication itself but the way many readers understood the communities around them. He wrote with insight, wit and an appreciation for the humour that can be found in everyday life. Readers could always count on Ken to find something worth noticing, whether it was a major cultural event or a small moment others might have overlooked. He had a gift for making people feel as though they were part of the story.

Those who knew him speak of his generosity, curiosity, and genuine interest in others. They describe someone who listened carefully, remembered details, and took the time to encourage emerging writers and performers. His writing reflected this approach. Rather than writing about people from a distance, he wrote about them with warmth, respect, and understanding.

Ken's interests stretched well beyond journalism. He was an actor, comedian, MC, and performer who brought energy and humour to stages and events throughout the territory. Whether behind a microphone, behind a keyboard or in conversation, he had a knack for making people laugh and giving them something to think about.

One of the themes that emerges again and again in reflections about Ken is connection. He brought people together through stories and conversation, and through a sincere belief that every community is made stronger when people take the time to know one another. In a territory where stories matter, Ken helped tell many of them. More importantly, he helped people feel seen within them.

I first met Ken upon my election to this Legislature in the year 2000 as part of the then-Liberal government. Ken, of course, was working for the Official Opposition, New Democrats, and I would invite all members to go back to Hansard, and you will recognize the wit and the edge of Ken's questions, and why I was not disappointed not to be a Cabinet minister right out of the gate — so I wouldn't have to answer those questions. Pat Duncan gave me a little bit of time in the backbenches to get a sense for what it would be like.

We extend our condolences to his wife, Sharolyn Lee, his children, grandchildren, extended family and the many friends and colleagues who are mourning his loss. We also share our gratitude for the humour, insight, and creativity he brought to life in the Yukon. Though his voice is no longer with us, the stories he told continue to remind us of the people, places, and experiences that make this territory special.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I rise today to pay tribute to Ken Bolton, a former Yukoner, writer, stand-up comedian, political organizer, and by all the accounts that I have read, a true character who could not be described by just one title.

Before coming to the Yukon, Ken had owned two weekly publications in Eastern Canada. He came north to work with the Yukon government, but it wasn't long before his creative talents became a part of Yukon life. In 2009, Ken began writing a column for What's Up Yukon called "Dear Mr. Ed", written under the wonderfully memorable alter ego of Rodney Daughtery, from Dingwell's Pond, Prince Edward Island. That alone tells you something about Ken's sense of humour. Ken went on to serve as editor of What's Up Yukon until 2011. In more recent years, he continued contributing articles. In preparing for this tribute, I had the pleasure of reading his very entertaining pieces, "Have I Lost It, or Am I Just Losing It?" — parts 1 and 2.

Ken was a longtime staffer for the NDP, working as a caucus researcher and party spokesperson. He retired and ran for the NDP in the 2008 federal election.

Although Ken eventually left the Yukon and moved to Ontario, his time here left an impression. For those who knew him, watched him perform, read his writing, or worked alongside him, Ken Bolton was part of what made the Yukon a little more colourful. We were fortunate to have him as one of its characters, creators, and performers.

I send my condolences to Ken's family, friends, and colleagues.

Speaker: There are no members' statements today.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Currie Dixon: I have for tabling the 2025–26 Yukon Water Board annual report, tabled pursuant to section 4.8 of the memorandum of understanding dated November 10, 2026, between the Yukon Water Board and the Government of Yukon.

Hon. Brad Cathers: Pursuant to section 6(1) of the *Health Act*, I have for tabling the *2025 Yukon Health Status Report Update — Focus on Communicable and Infectious Diseases*.

Hon. Wade Istchenko: Pursuant to section 48(1) of the *Environment Act*, I have for tabling the *Yukon State of the Environment Report 2026 — A report on environmental indicators.*

Hon. Scott Kent: I have two reports for tabling. First of all, pursuant to section 5(h) of the *Education Act*, I have the *Department of Education 2025–26 Annual Report*, and pursuant to section 4(11) of the *Child Care Act*, I have the *Yukon Child Care Board 2025–26 Annual Report*.

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I have for tabling the *Red Tape Reduction Framework*, as well as for tabling the *Red Tape Reduction — What We Heard* report.

Speaker: Are there any committee reports to be presented?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Question — Catholic schools

Kate White: In 2025, a Catholic school principal resigned. She accused the bishop of interfering in school operations related to inclusivity, SOGI policies, and bullying staff. She also said that the department had ignored her repeated request to define the bishop's role and set boundaries.

The Child and Youth Advocate's recent review of SOGI policy implementation found that the bishop's bullying and homophobia continue to cause damage to the Catholic school system. Multiple educators have transferred out of the Catholic schools or left the education system entirely. School council members have resigned, and school staff have walked out of department-sanctioned professional development. The advocate said — and I quote: "Continued acts of homophobic violence and bullying by individuals with public responsibilities within the education system is egregious and a blatant violation of the policy. Just as unacceptable has been EDU's lack of a firm response to these actions."

What steps is this government taking to prevent ongoing bullying, harassment, and homophobia by the bishop in Catholic schools?

Hon. Scott Kent: The member opposite is correct. We did receive the Undercurrents report from the Child and Youth Advocate. We did provide an initial response at the end of June, and we're looking to provide a final response to the initial report on December 1.

Catholic separate schools operate within Yukon's publicly funded education system under an agreement between the Government of Yukon and the Catholic Episcopal Corporation. The *Education Act* provides for publicly funded Catholic separate schools within our system, and the Department of Education supports Catholic schools in accordance with Yukon legislation and policy. Department of Education staff work with the Catholic separate schools to support compliance with Canadian and Yukon legislation and department policies, including the SOGI policy, including the review of both locally developed courses and curriculum resources.

I believe that, just speaking on behalf of the Government of Yukon, we appreciate the role of the Catholic separate schools in our education system. We appreciate what they do, the success that they have had, and the successful stories that we hear about them. There is a wait-list for both of the elementary schools. St. Francis of Assisi is near capacity, so I believe that this is also a popular choice for Yukon families that choose this type of education for their children.

Kate White: So, those are hollow words for those who face the bullying, the harassment, or the homophobia from the bishop. So, the Child and Youth Advocate's review found that the Catholic Episcopal Corporation routinely oversteps its authority on SOGI in schools. The advocate found that — and I quote: "The corporation's opposition to the SOGI policy over the last several years has resulted not just in homophobic and transphobic rhetoric, but harmful actions and decisions that have endangered the safety of 2SLGBTQIA+ students, families, staff, and allies." In 2013, the minister wrote an open letter that stressed that the corporation's policies are largely inconsistent with Yukon education policies, the *Human Rights Act*, and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. He continued by stating that Catholic schools must — and I quote: "first and foremost respect and meet the requirements of Yukon Education's policies and the laws of the Yukon."

So, will the Minister of Education recommit to the words that he wrote 13 years ago and ensure that the Catholic corporation does not continue to overstep its authority on Yukon school policies?

Hon. Scott Kent: I remember that letter that I wrote 13 years ago as Minister of Education at the time, and I do stand by the words in that letter that I sent.

Of course, there was a different bishop at the time. There's a new bishop. I've met with the bishop on a number of occasions. We've committed to meet quarterly. I've met regularly with the Catholic school councils here in the Yukon, and I've had the occasion for one meeting with the Catholic Education Association of Yukon.

I believe that obviously the words that I wrote in that letter 13 years ago are words that I stand by, and we continue to work with the Catholic Association to ensure that they follow the legislation and the policies of the Department of Education.

Kate White: So, the bishop's ongoing influence on Catholic educational resources becomes especially disturbing when we hear about what that means in practice. The advocate highlighted in the report that a homophobic textbook used at a Catholic school was only withdrawn after a public scandal. However, its replacement was also found to be homophobic. That newer book

was still approved by this Yukon Party government with so-called mitigations to improve SOGI inclusion. We know from a recent ATIPP that the Catholic corporation is pushing back even on those limited conditions placed on this resource. The Yukon education policies are to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students and educators. So, it's deeply concerning to see that this new textbook was approved, knowing that it contains homophobic content.

So, can the minister confirm whether any of the conditions restricting homophobic resources have been watered down or renegotiated since the St. Francis School Council and the Catholic Episcopal Corporation raised their objections?

Hon. Scott Kent: Right now we're actively working with the St. Francis of Assisi School Council on those proposed mitigations for the *Morals and Ethics 12* course that the member opposite is referencing. Again, we'll continue to work with them. We'll continue to work with the episcopal corporation.

I do again want to acknowledge the positive aspects of the Catholic separate schools here in the Yukon. I think they do a tremendous job of educating students and providing that proper education. A recent example, of course, was last week with the Canadian Space Agency in attendance at the school, but that's just one of the examples of how positive the experience is at the Catholic schools for Yukon students. As I mentioned off the top, there are wait-lists for both of the elementary schools, and St. Francis of Assisi is at or near capacity, so it's not only the positive influence and role that I'm describing, but it's a choice of many Yukoners to send their students to that program.

Question — Yukon nominee program

Carmen Gustafson: Every person applying to the Yukon nominee program must pass a language test.

The Yukon government website tells applicants that they only accept recent language tests. For the past 13 years, Yukoners could take the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program here in Whitehorse. About 5,000 people did just that.

However, since September, there is nowhere in the Yukon to take this test. The testing centre lost its space at Yukon University, and there is no other suitable computer lab in Whitehorse. Currently, the nearest test centre is in Vancouver. So, a newcomer who needs this test now must pay over $300 for the test, plus a flight, a hotel, and time off work.

Has the minister been made aware of this change?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I'm aware of many changes and improvements that are being made to the immigration program. As I've said in this House before, the immigration program is a tool that is utilized by Yukon businesses to support labour market development. But I don't think anybody will agree that it's a perfect tool, and there are always areas for improvement.

I've been working with the federal government, and with my colleagues across the country to look at ways to improve the immigration program and to ensure that it is being utilized appropriately and fairly and safely for those who are both coming to Canada as well as those who are already in Canada. So, while I acknowledge that there are certainly things to improve, it has been a very effective tool for a lot of Yukon businesses as well as part of the economy here in the territory. But we do endeavour to make it more efficient, as well as looking at the way that the program has been run over the last several years.

We recently did an engagement, and we're working through those results, and we'll be sharing that information once it's available.

Carmen Gustafson: So, right now, Yukon nominee applicants are faced with no local access to English language testing. Taking the test in Vancouver has additional costs and barriers. This may mean a delayed application due to not being able to afford or schedule travel. With the cancellation of this program, it means that every nominee and employer will have to rely on testing done in another province. If the government requires a specific test, that test should be available locally so Yukoners can take it here at home.

What is the minister doing to restore access to English language testing in the Yukon?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: So, as I've said, the program is widely utilized, and it is a popular program among Yukon businesses. I've had many conversations over the course of the last year around the Yukon nominee program to find ways to improve its services and its utilization in the territory, as well as to ensure that it is achieving the goals that it's intended to achieve, and ensure that we are being measured in how we are utilizing it. I have had conversations with multiple organizations about this, and like I said, it isn't perfect, but there are ways that we are trying to improve it, and there is a steady opportunity for individuals who are both utilizing as well as applying through this program to be supported by the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture. Over the last year, there have been several opportunities where we've been able to connect people to utilize the programs we have within Yukon government, as well as to gain access to the federal supports.

I'm looking forward to the results of the recent engagement which was well utilized by businesses as well as those who have come through the immigration program. Again, like I said, we'll be sharing those results when they are available.

Carmen Gustafson: So, the government runs the nominee program with two intake windows each year. Each window is open for 12 days. Before September, nominee applicants competed for a few seats in the one local test room for language testing, but now there is no room at all.

People who miss a nominee application window wait six months for the next one. Many applicants do not have the money to fly down south, which can mean delaying their application. Some don't have six months left on their permits to wait, which means they risk giving up the life they are building in the Yukon and their employer and the territory losing a valuable worker.

So, how will the minister work with partners and stakeholders to explore alternatives for language testing to ensure that it doesn't negatively impact nominees currently living and working in the Yukon?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: Some may recall this program has taken a few iterations, and one of the changes that we've made more recently is to shift the intake as well as the qualifications for the intake. It is no longer first come, first served; it is more strategic in how we are applying this program.

As I've said, we have been working with many partners to help deliver this program, and Yukon University is one of them, among many other employer-driven type of services in the territory. So, I remain committed to ensuring that this program runs efficiently, is utilized effectively, efficiently, and fairly. So, as I've said in this House before, we are continuing to pursue improvements to the program as our economy shifts, as our circumstances here in the territory shift. Welcoming new Yukoners to the territory will always be a reality for us. So, I think as we go forward, we will look at the results and continually do updates and iterations, including language tests. There are ways to look at improving that, and I acknowledge it's not perfect, but we are doing our best to ensure that it is achieving its goal.

Question — Red tape reduction

Debra-Leigh Reti: Yesterday, after a year in office, the government released an eight-page red tape reduction framework, of which four pages are mostly blank. In the spring, the Premier committed to introducing legislation to guide red tape reduction, and he repeated that commitment this fall. The *Red Tape Reduction Framework* released yesterday makes no mention of that legislation.

Is the government still intending to introduce a new piece of legislation to guide red tape reduction, or has that idea been scrapped?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I think there's an opportunity here to highlight the work that we have done with the red tape reduction initiatives, and I'm really proud of the work that this government has done going into working with the public service as well as those in the community — businesses, NGOs, all sorts of organizations — in establishing the framework and determining the best path forward that would have the most meaningful results for Yukoners through this process.

In the framework, we committed to ensuring that we have regular reporting structures, as well as identifying and clarifying how we are learning about red tape reduction opportunities in Yukon government. So, there's been a great deal of work by the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture to ensure that we are receiving the information and that we are accountable to that information, that individuals are given the opportunity to hear back from us if they choose to, and/or to ensure that there is some anonymity to those who have decided to come forward and share some of their advice, either internal to the public service or otherwise.

So, the framework really highlights what we've heard and to establish a path going forward, and the overview of what we heard is establishing just that: what we've heard.

Debra-Leigh Reti: After a year in office, the government has not moved ahead with red tape reduction legislation and has produced an eight-page framework that contains four blank pages. One example the government likes to point to is the merger of the departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Culture into one department. However, a note that was sent to all government staff in August said — in quotation: "There are no changes to departmental services, programs, staffing, or points of contact."

Why is the government holding up the merger as an example of red tape reduction while admitting that there have in fact been no changes at all?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I think we'll just have to disagree on the amount of work that has gone into this and the amount of time that public servants have come forward to bring this framework together. I know that it takes a lot of time and energy to bring public servants together, especially at the senior level, to establish processes and make sure that information that's coming in from a public portal is properly synthesized and shared within our organization and then also shared outwards. So, while I do agree that the framework is simple, that is also by design.

With respect to the merger, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this because the amount of red tape that it has reduced in and of itself is also the stuff that I'm very proud of. It is bringing together two departments that serve very similar clients in many cases and enable staff in the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture to work with individuals to reduce the amount of reporting that might be required for some of the funding programs. It enables them to work with them individually on what is available instead of individuals having to go to multiple departments to gain support for their business development or tourism development. So, there are many examples of how we've reduced red tape just by that merger alone, as well as other opportunities to reduce overlap.

Debra-Leigh Reti: After a year in office, the government has produced the *Red Tape Reduction Framework*. It's eight pages long, of which four pages are mostly blank. It has merged two government departments but hasn't made any changes except to print new letterhead and create a new name for the department. The Yukon Party platform promised to use a legislative committee to review this red tape.

Can the minister confirm that the legislative committee has met only twice over the last year, hasn't met since March 13, and hasn't reviewed a single regulation or reduced any red tape?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: Part of the work internally on red tape reduction is to look at the regulations, and that work is ongoing. I think that there is plenty of opportunity to update and modernize our existing legislative framework, and we will endeavour to utilize the existing structures within Yukon government to do just that. The framework may not be appreciated by all, but it's certainly appreciated by me, and I am quite proud of what we've been able to achieve as an entire government, as a whole of government, going forward.

Speaker's statement — Guidelines for questions on committee proceedings

Speaker: Order. I just want to remind members that a question is out of order if it seeks information from a member about proceedings in a committee which has not yet made its report to the House but is in order if it asks only if the committee has considered a certain matter, when the committee will next meet, or when a committee report will be tabled in the House.

Question — Supports for students with complex needs

Linda Moen: In 2024, the Child and Youth Advocate's Close to Home report investigated the Department of Education's treatment of children with complex needs and found multiple deeply concerning issues. The report found that government structures and systems are contributing to poorer outcomes for children with complex needs and their families.

The minister's response to the advocate last June says that 24 students with complex medical needs do not have the required supports to attend school full time. Some of these children are not able to go to school without all their supports.

Can the minister explain why these students are still not in school full time?

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Speaker, I believe the member opposite is referring to a progress report that was given to the advocate on actions taken and work underway, which was done on January 13, 2026.

Education and Health and Social Services continue to work together to improve support for students with complex needs and their families. The departments are working to strengthen coordination of services and supports for students, as I've talked about in the House over the past number of days during Committee of the Whole on education debates. We've taken steps to hire additional individuals, including two registered nurses to assist students with complex medical needs. We've also increased shared resource spaces in a number of schools and expanded those services. We continue to hire additional educational assistants and learning assistance teachers as well. So, there is a lot of work underway. Of course, we want to ensure that students have the opportunity to go to school, and that's why we're making investments like the ones we are.

Linda Moen: Still, 24 students are not attending school full time. Section 15 of the *Education Act* says students who need specialized education programs are entitled to an individualized education plan, or IEP, delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment.

However, earlier this Sitting, I asked about students whose IEPs had been cut or reduced. The minister's only reply was to share staffing numbers, and again, there was no answer about what this means to the minister's obligation to uphold the requirements of the *Education Act*.

So, on behalf of Yukon families, I ask again: How does the minister justify cuts to IEPs when this goes against the obligations of the *Education Act*?

Hon. Scott Kent: As I've mentioned, the Department of Education continues to strengthen supports available in Yukon schools through staffing investments and expanded specialist services.

Student Support Services works with schools to create inclusive and neuro-friendly spaces, both as stand-alone facilities within schools and throughout school environments. Student Support Services also offers specialized support from a professional consultant team that includes speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, nurses, inclusion and behaviour consultants, and specialized teachers for vision and hearing.

Of course, there may be disputes with respect to individual education plans. We work with families through the school-based teams to try to alleviate those concerns that families may have. But ultimately, if a parent feels like their IEP is not being adhered to, there is, of course, the Education Appeal Tribunal, which is another opportunity for them to have those matters heard by an independent body who will make a ruling on that.

Linda Moen: Last week, the Minister of Health and Social Services said that his department and the Department of Education still have to work out who does what to coordinate services for children with complex medical needs. He also stated that the IEPs are the Department of Education's responsibility, and they admit that they are not being fully met at this point in time. Yesterday, the Minister of Education was unable to explain how the two departments coordinate support or whose obligation it is to make sure students get the support they need in schools. The Yukon government needs to take responsibility, regardless of which department, to ensure a child's needs are being met in and out of school.

How will this government meet that responsibility?

Hon. Scott Kent: What I said to the member yesterday, when asked — and I believe it was the Leader of the Official Opposition who also asked about this issue — is that a Health and Social Services policy exists. I need to meet with my senior officials and with the Department of Health and Social Services, the minister and his senior officials, to discuss how best to implement that policy and to ensure that the students' needs are being met. There is cooperation across a number of different sectors between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services.

One of the things that is in both of our mandate letters is the development of a therapeutic school. I mentioned yesterday again that, while we're not as far advanced on that as we would like to be, it is something that we're working on. We've heard from a number of individuals in the Yukon the importance of developing that.

So, work is underway. Cooperation between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services exists today, and we'll continue to foster that. I'll work with my colleague to address the situation that the members opposite have raised.

Question — Electricity supply and reliability

Tyler Porter: I know we've spent a considerable amount of time in this House discussing the challenges facing Yukon's electricity system, but with winter looking like it's here to stay and temperatures expected to get colder, reliable and affordable electricity will be on the minds of many Yukoners. Population growth, increasing demand, and years of underinvestment in new generating capacity have left us with very little room for error. We know that difficult decisions need to be made, and that a different approach to energy planning is needed, particularly in support of continued growth of our rural communities.

Can the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources provide an update on what our government is doing to ensure Yukoners have reliable and affordable electricity both this winter and into the future?

Hon. Ted Laking: Yukon is facing significant electricity challenges, and we cannot afford to delay action. Winter peak demand increased approximately 25 percent between 2019 and 2024, and last December we set a new peak demand record of 127 megawatts using more than 90 percent of available generating capacity. This is not just a concern for the future; it's real today.

In some communities not connected to the main grid, capacity constraints on their electricity grids already mean new buildings cannot connect until more generation is available. We want to prevent these challenges from expanding territory-wide because we do not want this to happen, and we need to get ourselves out of this hole. That is why we have focused so much effort on new generation projects like the Whitehorse Power Centres to prevent these issues from expanding territory-wide.

We are acting on both supply and demand, and this includes additional generating capacity, stabilizing existing generating capacity, enhancing demand-side management programs through Peak Smart and managed electric vehicle charging, and improved emergency preparedness. We're taking action now while developing a 20-year strategy for reliable, resilient, and affordable electricity.

Tyler Porter: As the minister has indicated, in communities like Old Crow, Burwash Landing, and Destruction Bay, electricity capacity is no longer just a concern for the future. It is a challenge they are facing today. As a rural MLA, I understand how important reliable electricity is. We need it to address housing needs, support local businesses, and create opportunities for community growth. A rural community should not be held back simply because there is not enough electricity available to support new development.

What investments are being made to address these capacity constraints, and when can rural communities expect additional generating capacity to become available?

Hon. Ted Laking: Rural electricity capacity is an important challenge identified in our work in developing the winter reliable energy plan. We are working with ATCO Electric Yukon on targeted generation projects to address existing constraints. In Old Crow, additional generation is being planned to meet growing community needs. In Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay, additional generation is also being advanced, with projects expected to be online by early 2028, and we are also advancing a solar and battery project in Watson Lake.

But we also need to increase dependable supply across the territory. Through our Arctic Sovereignty Grid Plan, we are advancing three major projects: the Whitehorse Power Centres, Mayo hydro modernization, and the Atlin hydro expansion. These investments will significantly strengthen our electricity system and provide the capacity needed to support future growth. Yukoners deserve an electricity system that supports their homes, businesses, and communities. We are making the necessary investments to deliver on that.

Tyler Porter: Addressing our immediate electricity needs is important, but equally important is ensuring we are prepared for where Yukon will be 10 or 20 years from now. As we continue to develop land, build housing, and create new economic opportunities, we need to ensure our electricity system can keep pace with that growth.

We know that meeting Yukon's future electricity needs will require significant infrastructure investments, and we cannot expect Yukon ratepayers to shoulder the enormous cost of these investments on their own. Rather than waiting until we reach the limits of our electricity system, we need to be making decisions today that will put our territory in a stronger position for the future.

How is our government approaching long-term energy planning and infrastructure investments to support Yukon's future growth?

Hon. Ted Laking: We know that addressing these challenges requires a new approach to electricity planning. The winter reliable energy plan will establish a proactive, 20-year road map for Yukon's electricity future. This will be supported through a new integrated resource plan, which will forecast future demand, assess generation options, and identify the infrastructure investments needed. This will also be supported by our recently announced initiative on the Power Potential Portal to identify other projects that could be led by proponents outside of government. We are examining additional hydroelectric generation, emerging technologies, and alternative heating systems.

Just as importantly, we need to integrate energy planning into housing, land development, and economic decisions. We can't plan for future growth without the electricity capacity to support it. We cannot afford to let electricity constraints hold back Yukon's future, and we are moving from reacting to shortages to planning ahead, making the investments and taking the difficult decisions necessary to support growing communities and a reliable, affordable electricity system. We are building the electricity capacity Yukon needs to grow, and we are doing it with a long-term plan for reliability and affordability.

Question — Children in care

Brent McDonald: In February of this year, the Auditor General released a report highlighting significant concern about the quality of support provided to Yukon children in care. This report found that required visits between social workers and children were not always completed, and that, when serious incidents occurred involving children in care, their families were not informed.

Can the minister tell this House what specific actions have been taken since February to ensure required visits are happening and, when serious incidents occur, families are promptly notified?

Hon. Brad Cathers: The government accepted all nine recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General, as well as reviewing the 20 additional recommendations which came from the Public Accounts Committee related to this area.

On the status of the work, the department issued a letter in response to the Public Accounts Committee's recommendations on October 23, with a report on progress in areas including group home policies, staff training, critical incident reporting, and compliance reporting. There have been steps taken in areas including compliance monitoring and analysis, foster and extended family caregiver screening, group home policies, monitoring group home capacity and staff ratio, cultural plans for Indigenous children, financial and human resources assessments, and learning management system and training tracking, as well as compliance reports and data monitoring and outcomes. The department will continue to report as work proceeds.

Brent McDonald: The Auditor General's report also found that 41 children in the territory were living in group homes, of which 29 percent were less than six years old.

The report raised concern that some of these homes were operating over capacity and were not age-appropriate for very young children. While group homes provide an important service, it's understood that children achieve better outcomes in stable family-based environments.

Given these findings, what is this government doing to expand family-based care options and improve conditions for young children who are currently living in care settings?

Hon. Brad Cathers: I actually agree generally with what the member said about children doing better in family options. That's why I gave direction earlier this year to the department to expand the scope of the work they're doing to go beyond what was identified in the Auditor General's report to also look at what we can do to better support foster parents and extended caregivers. I've heard input from foster parents about how the system could improve. I've also discussed this matter with the Child and Youth Advocate, and work is underway in this area because I absolutely agree that the system needs to do more to support foster parents and community caregivers in taking care of children and to look at everything from speeding up administrative processes to simply how that support operates. So, we look forward to being able to share more information as this work progresses.

Brent McDonald: The Auditor General's report also explained that most Indigenous children in out-of-home placements did not have a cultural plan. In fact, 90 percent of children did not have these plans at all. Cultural plans are intended to ensure that Indigenous children maintain connections to their community, culture, traditions, and identity. It was reported that work was being done with First Nations and Indigenous governing bodies to complete these targets.

Can the minister update Yukoners on whether the number of children with cultural plans has improved and the steps the government is taking to meet their legal obligation to have cultural plans in place?

Hon. Brad Cathers: The work on cultural plans for First Nation and Indigenous children is underway.

That includes work with Yukon First Nations, CYFN, as well as out-of-territory Indigenous governing bodies to establish First Nation- and Indigenous-led processes and ongoing partnership for development, implementation, and maintenance of cultural plans for children in care.

I don't have the specific numbers in front of me that the member asked for, but again, this is one of the nine recommendations issued by the Auditor General. Work is underway, and as I indicated in my previous responses, as the department has committed to as well, there will be ongoing reporting as the department makes progress toward implementing the Office of the Auditor General report.

I would also note back to when the Auditor General issued the report that they also acknowledged and gave credit to the department for setting timelines for following through on the recommendations. And I thank the staff of Health and Social Services for the work they're doing in acting on the OAG report, in acting on the Public Accounts Committee recommendations, as well as the area that I identified in my previous response, taking steps to ensure that we are better supporting foster parents and extended family caregivers by looking at that structure. And we look forward to reporting further progress in that area.

NOTICE OF OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Debra-Leigh Reti: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3)(b), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 25, 2026. It is Bill No. 300, the *Act to amend the Elections Act (2026)*, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Lane Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2, I would like to identify the items standing for the Official Opposition on Wednesday, November 25. They are Motion No. 198, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini; Motion No. 189, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; and Motion No. 215, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Scott Kent: I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5 — Operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture

Hon. Scott Kent: I move that Committee of the Whole consider the operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture immediately following the adoption of this motion, until 2:45 p.m. or when there are no further questions for the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Culture, who may have department officials seated with her.

Chair: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Committee of the Whole consider the operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture immediately following the adoption of this motion, until 2:45 p.m. or when there are no further questions for the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Culture, who may have departmental officials seated with her.

Is there any debate?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: I think the yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5 agreed to

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Draft Segment 018-033

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is consideration of the operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture.

Hon. Jen Gehmair: The Government of Yukon is committed to building a resilient, diversified economy, supporting the people, businesses, and communities that make our territory such a remarkable place to live, work, and visit. That work takes many forms. It means helping Yukon's businesses navigate changing economic conditions, supporting workers, improving access to government programs, and strengthening the industries that contribute to our economy. It also means investing in tourism, preserving our heritage, supporting Yukon artists, and ensuring that our history and culture remain accessible to Yukoners and visitors alike. Today, I would like to highlight some of the work underway across the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture and the practical ways these initiatives are supporting Yukoners.

Obviously, one of the most noteworthy developments is the joining of Economic Development and Tourism and Culture to form the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture. This strategic move builds resilience, increases budget flexibility, and allows us to tackle larger policy and program challenges without growing government. We're strengthening collaboration between teams that have already worked together, reducing duplication, and aligning priorities so that we can better support businesses, tourism operators, creators, and community organizers. An example of this is a single agreement with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to support the labour market needs for the tourism industry.

We're finding cost savings in how we organize our staff, notably the move to a single deputy minister's office. Without affecting existing assignments and without laying off any staff, we have supported leave and special assignments without needing to backfill positions as a result of our combined team. In return, we've been able to take these savings to address immediate needs and pressure areas, such as supporting a dedicated archaeology position in the Klondike, increasing capacity in front-line immigration programming, and offsetting impacts of reduced art funding due to the reduction from Lotteries Yukon constraints. These changes illustrate tangible examples of how the merger has allowed us to strengthen our capacity and benefit the public without increasing overall resources. As the merger proceeds to take shape, we'll continue to look for practical ways to improve services and make better use of public funds, working with staff, industry, and partners to build on progress we've already seen.

A strong economy depends on businesses being able to grow, workers having the opportunity to develop their skills, and employers being able to find the people they need. That is why we continue to work with the Government of Canada and other jurisdictions on initiatives that support trade, workforce development, and economic resilience. Our trade team has joined provinces and territories across the country in signing the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement on the Sale of Goods. This agreement helps reduce internal trade barriers by allowing goods approved for sale in one Canadian jurisdiction to be sold in another without additional testing or requirements. Reducing unnecessary barriers can help make it easier for businesses to access markets, strengthen supply chains, and support economic activity across the country and here at home.

We're also working with the federal government to help Yukoners respond to changing labour market conditions. Through the Canada–Yukon workforce tariff response, the two governments are delivering targeted training and employment services to help workers return to the labour market and strengthen the resilience of communities affected by economic disruption. Our work with the federal government also includes support for skilled trade training and workforce development through the Team Canada Strong fund. These initiatives recognize that a resilient economy requires more than investment alone. It requires people with the skills and opportunities to participate in the workforce and businesses that can adapt as economic conditions change.

Today, I tabled the *Red Tape Reduction Framework* and the "what we heard" document, and we are pleased to be moving forward on our mandate commitments and working toward a coordinated government-wide approach to reducing unnecessary administrative burden. The framework commits the Yukon government to developing action plans based on programs and services. Feedback will help shape departmental plans and identify opportunities for improvement. The government will also identify cross-departmental initiatives that address common issues affecting Yukoners.

We know that interacting with government can sometimes involve unnecessary complexity. For a small business owner, an organization delivering services in a community, or an individual trying to access a program, administrative requirements can take time and energy away from the work they're trying to accomplish. That is why we are leading a government-wide effort to identify and reduce red tape and make it easier for Yukoners and businesses to work with government.

In May 2026, the government launched an online form, making it easier for Yukoners in and outside of government to provide feedback about red tape. The goal is straightforward: less time spent navigating government processes and more time for Yukoners and businesses to get on with their work.

Obviously, reducing red tape is not a one-time exercise. It requires us to continually question how we do things, remove unnecessary steps, and make sure our processes are serving the people they're intended to help. This work will continue to be a priority, and we will look forward to identifying further opportunities to cut red tape, improve services, and make it easier for Yukoners to do business with government.

A resilient economy also depends on having the workforce needed to support businesses delivering services to sustain communities. Immigration is one important part of that picture, and we are currently engaging with the public and stakeholders on the future of the Yukon nominee program. This engagement is an opportunity to hear from employers, workers, communities,

and other interested parties about the role immigration should play in meeting the territory's needs. This work is ongoing, and the feedback we receive will help inform decisions about the program's future.

In the meantime, we are making administrative adjustments to the program, and in 2027 we'll make sure that it's responsive to current demands and runs more efficiently. These include increasing the target of nominees dedicated to employers located in Yukon communities, more robust scoring for workers who have resided longer in the territory, and expanding priority to positions in regulated health care and social services.

Alongside this consideration of workforce needs, we are also taking practical steps to address the costs Yukon businesses face. The recently launched packaging and paper rebate helps businesses manage some of the costs associated with extended producer responsibility. For businesses operating in a small and often challenging market, understanding and adapting to new requirements can be demanding. Programs such as this are one way to help us address these costs while businesses continue to serve their customers and contribute to the local economy. In addition, we are continuing to support organizations like the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce to represent the collective voice of businesses and put on small events like Small Business Week.

Our support for organizations like Yukonstruct, Yukon Venture Angels, and Tech Yukon is helping to shape the innovation ecosystem here in the territory. We've seen startups attracting capital from outside the territory, businesses developing their e-commerce capabilities, and even programming to help tradespeople become their own business owners over the past year.

We are doing the work in the department to attract capital to major projects in the Yukon. In partnership with Yukon Mining Alliance, we hosted the mineral property tours in Dawson, which attracted investors from across the world. Through July this year, Yukon projects had already exceeded the total amount of capital raised from 2025, and we're seeing this momentum continue.

Kate White: Today, I'm going to just follow up on questions that were asked in Question Period, particularly around the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program. So, for the last 13 years, Yukoners or would-be Yukoners (I say that as folks who were going through the immigration process) or real estate agents (if you want to be a real estate agent, you also have to take this exam) were able to take this exam locally. They were able to go to Yukon University. It was run by the instructors who do the testing for the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program.

But as of September of this year, their ability to access the computer lab at the university has ended, which means that anyone applying for a nominee position and requiring the language proficiency exam results will need to leave the territory.

So, we asked in Question Period, but I'll just ask again: Was the minister aware that this change had happened? If not, I'm happy to be the first one — or I guess the second one — to bring it forward. So, this has happened.

Was the minister aware before we asked in Question Period today?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: There are many ways in which I interact with either recipients or those who are utilizing this program and am made aware of all sorts of either challenges or opportunities within this program.

But to answer the member's questions, I can say that these requirements, as well as the standards, are set by the federal government. Accredited businesses are offered the opportunity to deliver this testing. So, while it is no longer available in the territory, we will work with the federal government to discuss options around language proficiency tests in the territory and to explore ways to increase access to those for those who are requiring that testing.

Kate White: I appreciate you running through the federal government's obligations and what the program is.

I just want to talk about the program specifically. So, understanding that we had nearly 300 nominees accepted this year in Yukon — I think that was the number. I'll say hundreds of nominees.

For anyone who wants to apply for permanent residency or anyone who wants to apply for the nominee program if they're here, they require a language test. So, previously, folks in the Yukon could access an exam here. The exam still costs money. It's $300. I'm not disputing that.

What I'm concerned about is proximity. So, this is no longer available. The service is no longer available not just in Whitehorse but in Yukon. This is, in my mind, a concern going forward, both for immigration purposes and for economic supports for small businesses.

I just wanted to know if the minister was open to working with organizations or folks in the territory to make sure that this testing could still happen going forward in the territory.

Hon. Jen Gehmair: So, as I think I said before, but I'll say it differently, we are committed to ensuring that this program is delivered effectively, and that, as I've noted, this service is delivered through accredited private organizations that are accredited through the federal government, and the federal government accredits them and also sets the standards. But what I have said and what I will say again is that we will work with those accredited organizations to see what the options are here for having more localized opportunities available for those who are working their way through the nominee program. The answer is yes.

Kate White: Yes is excellent. Then I'm not going to ask for clarification around which program the minister was referring to because I'm not sure if it was the nominee program or the English proficiency. But I'm only talking about the English proficiency. That's the only thing I want to talk about.

So, one of the challenges that existed is that this requires computers. There needs to be a minimum of 20 computers, and there needs to be the ability for there to be cameras so that it can be recorded for the nominee process. Again, this is required too for the Yukon government's nominee process. I understand it is a federal thing. I understand that. Twenty computers are required, and so are cameras.

For example, L'AFY has the ability to do the French proficiency exams, but they don't have 20 computers. The Yukon Literacy Coalition has indicated that they would be interested in supporting, but they don't have 20 computers or a computer lab. So, the only place that I know right now that has a computer lab is the university, and without access to that, that means that these tests can't be run here.

So, I just want to know if the minister is open to approaching the university about why the testing has been stopped or how come that has changed, or if the minister is willing to look at other options of making sure that space is available so that folks in the Yukon — employers, would-be nominees, would-be permanent residents — have the ability to do the testing in the territory.

So, is the minister open to meeting with either the folks who ran the proficiency exam or others to ensure that exam can continue to happen in the territory?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: The short answer to that is yes, and officials within Economy, Tourism and Culture have already been in touch with individuals at Yukon University, and from my understanding, some of the requirements that are necessary to deliver these tests do go beyond the technical capacity of computers and include security requirements from the federal government. I would say there's a bit more to it, but, of course, we would be willing to have conversations with organizations that express interest, and we will continue our discussions with Yukon University to understand what the implications of this are and if there are paths forward that we can work together on.

Kate White: Thanks to the minister for that response. When I met with the two instructors or the two testers, I said that if we ask the question, when you go knock on the door, someone will know what you're talking about. So, this is me making sure that when they knock on the door of Economy, Tourism and Culture, someone will know what they're talking about because it took me a while to catch up.

We have such a limited amount of time. I just want to know where we're at in the Old Fire Hall process. I'll note that in some of the minister's response, I believe yesterday it sounded less maybe like it would be a public space, but it could possibly be, for example, a business that could take it over.

Can the minister give me an idea of what she's looking for in that space? Right now, I'll note that the Old Fire Hall, as a space that's run by the Yukon Arts Centre — as a gathering space, a performance space, a meeting space — all these different kinds of spaces are critical. I just want to make sure that it doesn't turn into offices, as an example. That is my own selfish reasoning. So, can the minister let me know what she's thinking as she moves toward the request for proposals on the Old Fire Hall?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: The Old Fire Hall will be available to utilize, and over the next few months we are advertising a public application process for a lease for programming in the Old Fire Hall. The intention is for it to be utilized as an arts, culture, and community access space.

We've established a committee that consists of a diversity of individuals and interests, including art sector, cultural sector, City of Whitehorse, and businesses, to review the process, and currently they are reviewing the application process for the lease. So, that will be going out soon to the public. It takes a bit of time to bring community organizations together to ensure that we are all moving forward together, and that the interests of the downtown community are being addressed.

Information sessions will be hosted in December and January, where the community can come and learn about what it is that we're doing with that space, what the plans are, and what the process will look like, so that folks have the option and the opportunity to engage in the process, or just have themselves be informed about what the plans are and what the opportunities are that are presented in the space.

Kate White: I know my time is very limited with two minutes, and I'm grateful to have the conversation today with the minister and her officials, but I really hope this is the last time we have these conversations go around because I got things to ask about in health, and we got things to ask about in education. So, thanks to the minister and her officials for being here today on a day where it's not included in Bill No. 204 for actual money, but happy to have these conversations and look forward to more going forward. I thank you for the exchange, and I hope we don't talk again this week.

Hon. Jen Gehmair: With all due respect, I feel the same way, so I appreciate the member's sentiment.

With that said, I will take the opportunity to thank my officials and apologize for not introducing them ahead of time. But with me, I have Sierra van der Meer and Harry Borlase. Thank you, and I so appreciate their time. With that, I would like to thank the officials, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this.

I did only get partway through my speech today, but I would also like to acknowledge that there are many individuals listening on the line, some of whom are from the Department of Tourism and Culture, and I did not get to that section of the speech. So, please know that was not intentional, and I actually hope that I do get the opportunity to stand up and speak to this again.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The time for consideration of the operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5, has now expired.

Pursuant to Motion No. 161, adopted by the House as amended on October 7, 2026, Motion No. 203, adopted on November 17, 2026, and Motion No. 212, adopted on November 23, 2026, Committee of the Whole will receive witnesses at 3:00 p.m. to answer questions regarding electrical infrastructure and services.

In order to allow the witnesses to take their places in the Chamber, the committee will now recess and reconvene at 3:00 p.m.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Appearance of witnesses from ATCO Electric Yukon, Yukon Energy Corporation, and Yukon Development Corporation

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from ATCO Electric Yukon, the Yukon Energy Corporation, and the Yukon Development Corporation.

All members and witnesses are reminded to refer their remarks through the Chair.

The time allotted for opening remarks by the witnesses is five minutes in total.

First, I believe the Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will introduce the witnesses.

Hon. Ted Laking: On behalf of Committee of the Whole, I would like to welcome the witnesses: Joe MacGillivray, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation; Rod Savoie, Chair of the board of directors of the Yukon Energy Corporation; Shane Andre, Acting President of the Yukon Development Corporation; Doug Janzen, Chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors; Jay Massie, Vice President of Northern Development and Indigenous Relations at ATCO Electric Yukon; and Tony Badry, Manager of ATCO Electric Yukon.

Chair: Would the witnesses like to make a brief opening remark?

Doug Janzen: I am pleased to be here on behalf of the Yukon Development Corporation. Our legislative role is to ensure an adequate supply of cost-effective, sustainable energy to enable growth in the territory, and as committed to in the final agreements, to enable First Nation participation in the territory.

As sole shareholder of Yukon Energy Corporation, we work closely with Yukon Energy and the Government of Yukon to deliver a reliable, affordable, and sustainable electrical system. We oversee financing and delivery of Yukon's capital plan, including major projects like the Whitehorse Power Centres and upgrades to the Mayo hydro facility.

Yukon Development Corporation also supports affordability by administering the affordability rate relief program, a 25-percent rebate on the first 1,500 kilowatt hours each month from October 2026 through March 2027.

Earlier this month, Yukon Development Corporation launched the Power Potential Portal, giving First Nations, private companies, and other proponents a clear and consistent way to bring forward generation and storage projects at any stage of development.

We're also advancing our work with independent power producers, including supporting Tlingit Homeland Energy LP, or THELP, to advance the Atlin hydro expansion, which is an 8.5-megawatt project that would add dependable winter capacity and has been recently highlighted in the federal budget.

The challenges facing the Yukon's electrical system are real, but so is the expertise and the commitment of people working together to address them.

Jay Massie: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, members, for having me here today.

ATCO Electric Yukon is mainly the distribution utility in the Yukon, with 70 local employees providing service in 19 communities. We also operate 12 power plants across the Yukon and provide customer billing for all customers.

As the Yukon's population continues to grow, we are focused on maintaining and investing in the power system. Between 2024 and 2027, ATCO will invest nearly $100 million into our electricity system. These investments are not simply about maintaining our system; they are about ensuring the Yukon has safe and reliable electricity for the future growth and evolving needs of the Yukon.

Now, where to go next? Looking ahead, our focus remains on building a reliable, resilient, and sustainable energy future for the Yukon. One of the best examples is the partnerships with First Nations for the community-sized renewable projects completed in all of ATCO's isolated communities. These projects significantly reduce diesel consumption, lower emissions, and strengthen energy resilience in these regions. These projects demonstrate that renewable energy can deliver significant benefits when developed in the right scale and with the right infrastructure.

Rod Savoie: On behalf of Yukon Energy's board of directors, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before Committee of the Whole and provide an update on our work to meet the territory's growing electricity needs.

The Yukon's electricity system is under increasing pressure. Population growth, new development, and electrification are driving demand for power. Meeting these needs requires immediate action and significant long-term investment.

I want to emphasize that Yukon Energy is a publicly owned utility, managed and operated by Yukoners. Our employees live, work, and raise their families here. They are the people who respond when storms hit. They keep our electricity system operating and plan for the Yukon's energy future.

As a publicly owned utility, we recognize our responsibility to deliver results, manage public resources responsibly, and be accountable to Yukoners.

At the same time, we are advancing critical investments in the Whitehorse Power Centres and the Wareham dam to strengthen our electricity system for the future. These are complex projects that require careful planning and collaboration with First Nations and communities, and responsible decision-making.

Ultimately, this work is about more than generating electricity. It is about ensuring Yukoners can count on a safe, reliable electricity system that supports the communities we call home, the services we depend on, and the continued growth of our territory. Our responsibility is to make sure that we make decisions today that will help protect the safety, well-being, and prosperity of the Yukon for generations to come. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Lane Tredger: I'll start by thanking all the witnesses for being here, as well as all the people who've been working behind the scenes, I'm sure, to get them prepared.

We are, of course, having this conversation in a context where there is an incredible amount of concern, anxiety, and frustration to do with electricity in the Yukon, and I want to frame this conversation by saying that our approach is going to be ruthless on systems and generous to individuals. I want all the folks who are answering phones, who are out there reading meters, who are making sure the lines stay up in a storm to know that we do appreciate the work of all those people and that none of them individually is responsible for one customer's needs not getting met, but that is our responsibility as a whole, as a Legislative Assembly, as the people providing the services to make sure that Yukoners do have the services they need and deserve. I do really want to thank all the individual people who are working hard in, I think, a very difficult context to get customer bills out, to keep the lights on. I really do appreciate the work of all of them.

I want to just make one note as we get started. The witnesses spoke in their opening remarks about the importance of having a safe and reliable energy system, and I could not agree more. But I do want to add one more word in there, and that's affordability, an affordable electric system, because for Yukoners, if their lights are off because they couldn't afford the bill, or the lights are off because the energy is not there, it kind of amounts to the same thing for them. So, we all need our lights on. We all need our warm, cozy homes, and that's the goal of all the questions we're asking today.

I want to actually start by digging into this affordability piece because we talk to a lot of Yukoners about their electricity bills, and I know that they're not easy things to explain, and they're certainly not easy things to read. So, I'm hoping the witnesses could just start by giving us some really basic information.

What is the base rate of electricity for residential customers right now, and what riders are being added onto that?

Jay Massie: Maybe I'll start overall with ATCO's commitment on affordability. So, as you mentioned, riders — ATCO's Rider R that's on the bill — and I know they're never the easiest thing to understand for customers, for sure. Rider R for ATCO is 14.38 percent. That is the rider for ATCO and it's specific since 2011. When we talk about affordability and we look at our rider that goes into our rates for doing all of our business since 2011, it is 14.38 percent. So, when we looked at the affordability metrics, really over these last 10 years, inflation has been about 36 percent. I think really what it shows is that ATCO is focused on affordability. If we're at half of inflation over the last 10 years, where our rates are at, our commitment to affordability is shown in the rate we have for our billing.

For all the different riders that are on the bill, there are multiple riders — riders for ATCO, riders for Yukon Energy, a fuel rider. There are a number of different ones that are on there. I don't have them right in front of me. That really is part of why we place all that information on our website. I believe it's on Yukon Energy's website too. It will really define for customers what each rider is, how much it is, and what it is for.

Joe MacGillivray: For Yukon Energy, we have a few riders. We have Rider J, which is our revenue shortfall rider. That's at 100.23 percent of applicable base, and that's effective April 1, 2026. What this does is it recovers YEC generation and transmission revenue requirements approved by the Utilities Board.

We also have Rider J1, which is a temporary rate true-up rider; that's at 15.91 percent. It's a temporary rider to reconcile interim and final approved rates.

We also have, as Mr. Massie has pointed out, some additional riders. We have the low-water reserve fund, which is Rider E. So, this fund protects customers from the immediate impact of severe drought conditions, and it uses funds built up during favourable water conditions to smooth rates over time. Then we do have fuel riders as well, in addition to this.

Lane Tredger: Are there any changes to riders or the base rate that have already been approved but have not yet come into effect?

Joe MacGillivray: In our 2025–27 GRA, there were rates approved. All but one final rate increase have been implemented. We do have a 5.1-percent rate increase that's scheduled to come into place for January 1.

We have though been undertaking work to pursue external grant funding to offset some of those costs. What you're going to see is that as part of our 2025–27 GRA, there was that 5.1 percent, but we have managed to come up with a reduction to that through $30 million we've received through the federal government toward two of our projects in Mayo that were under rate in the coming year, so that will reduce the 5.1 to 3.2 percent.

We then have a further reduction that we are requesting with the Utilities Board, and that is due to the inclusion of Whitehorse Power Centres in the federal budget. We had phase 1 of the Whitehorse Power Centres in rate, so we will be requesting the Utilities Board to back that out as well, all of phase 1 of Whitehorse Power Centres. So, that will reduce that rate increase from 3.2 to 2.1 percent on January 1.

Lane Tredger: If I can just summarize and make sure that I've understood that correctly: There was a 5.1-percent rate increase scheduled for January 1, but through grant funding from the federal government, that has been reduced, and so customers can anticipate a 2.1-percent increase to their rate starting on January 1.

Can the witnesses confirm if that's correct?

Joe MacGillivray: Yes, I believe that's a proper explanation of it. I will note, though, that the SREPs funding that we received, the total amount was $50 million. We've applied the maximum that we can toward the projects that will be completed by 2027. We've applied the maximum, the $30 million, toward what would be coming into rate on January 1. There's a further $20 million that will be applied in our next GRA to future projects. It's specifically for the Wareham spillway.

Lane Tredger: I appreciate that explanation. I may come back to those funding questions, but to try not to jump around too much, I'm going to keep on the rate questions for a little bit.

What other charges are included on residential customers' bills? For example, service fees.

Jay Massie: Maybe I'll start with that — the base energy charge. There are energy charges, that is the amount of energy that a customer uses in a month. Then there's the basic customer charge that's on the customer's bill also. Those are the two basic charges. Out of the amount of energy that a customer uses is really what all the riders that Mr. MacGillivray spoke to are calculated on. You have your base customer charge that every customer is charged, and then you have an energy charge for how much energy that customer uses in a month. Then each rider is affected by how much energy they use.

Lane Tredger: How much is the basic customer charge, and is that constant from month to month? Does it apply to the household? And I understand that it applies to that customer regardless of how much energy they use. How much is that basic customer charge?

Jay Massie: It is a base customer charge of $14.65 a month. I should say this is for residential customers throughout the Yukon. A few years ago, in an effort to simplify bills, we went through a proceeding before the Utilities Board at that time about bill simplification and really rolling up some of the riders into that basic customer charge. So, customers will now see that the basic charge fluctuates with how much energy they use in a month, but underneath that, the basic customer charge per month is $14.65.

Lane Tredger: I assume there are other conditions in which customers might see additional charges, such as if there are perhaps disconnection or reconnection fees, or late charges, or interest charges if they had amounts owing. Can the witnesses talk about what other fees might be included on a customer's bills on top of the basic customer charge and the base energy charge?

Jay Massie: I'll start with that. So, as the member said, if a customer moves from one premises to another, there's a disconnect fee, and then a reconnect fee when they go to the new premises. Really, those are fairly base charges that cover some of the labour of our individuals going to the house to disconnect meters, reconnect at the new premises.

I don't have those charges right in front of me of how much they are. They are part of the *Terms and Conditions of Service.* They're approved by the Utilities Board and they're put in so they're the same for all customers on the reconnects and disconnects. Those are the ones that popped to my mind.

Joe MacGillivray: I would just add that they're in schedule D of the terms and conditions. That's where they're listed.

Lane Tredger: This is a question both for ATCO and Yukon Energy. When is each of these organizations next planning to do a rate application and apply to increase or change rates for customers?

Jay Massie: We do not have a plan at this moment. Our last rate application covered the years of 2023 and 2024. Our last rate adjustment was in, I believe, July of 2024. But at this time, we do not have a definitive date for the next time we have to be before the Utilities Board.

Joe MacGillivray: For Yukon Energy, our last rate application was 2025–2027. That takes us through the end of the calendar year 2027. We are considering timing now for the next. We'll begin work, but it's going to depend as well on federal funding that comes in. We don't have firm hard deadlines at this point in time.

Lane Tredger: I understand that there's not a specific date chosen yet, but as someone who's not working within the system, it would be helpful for me to understand what kind of time frame is even feasible. I imagine, if the witnesses wanted to bring one next week, they couldn't do it in one week because there would be a lot of work involved.

So, when there are no immediate plans, does that mean that there probably won't be one for the next, say, one year, for two years, for five years, or are we anticipating that there could be one within those time frames?

Joe MacGillivray: Yukon Energy does have a GRA that covers us to the end of 2027, and so it may be deemed to be prudent to have another GRA for 2028-29, but that timing is still being considered, and it will be heavily influenced by federal funding. We did have several projects that were identified in the federal budget, and those funds can greatly reduce the need for us to go to rate.

Jay Massie: For us, basically, the only time we have to go before the Utilities Board to adjust rates is when the current rates do not cover our revenue requirement for all the work that we have to do throughout the year.

So, again, we're set this year in 2026. We really have to see how the year ends for us. It's months and months of planning if we are to do a Utilities Board filing. Again, at this time we don't have one planned in front of us. Again, as the member said, it is a great amount of work to prepare and put that before the Utilities Board, but there's nothing planned at this time.

Lane Tredger: So, I'm wondering if ATCO or Yukon Energy — because I understand their bills come to residential customers as a combined bill in most parts of the Yukon — knows how many customers are currently behind on their electricity bills. I'm wondering if they could give us the comparison on those numbers between the current year and the prior year?

Jay Massie: I would say we don't have the information in front of us of how many customers are not current.

That we would have to take away to see if we can find that information.

Lane Tredger: Would the witness be willing to provide that information in writing to the Assembly once he's had a chance to go back to the folks at his organization to find it?

Jay Massie: Certainly, we'll take that away to look to see if we find that information, and, of course, with the caveats of all the customer privacy information, we'll provide a number. What that looks like in our system for our customers is what we can provide.

Joe MacGillivray: At Yukon Energy, we did see an increase in customer arrears since COVID. That really was the impetus, I think, for the initial increase. We have seen amounts increasing over the past year or two though, and I don't have those numbers at my fingertips. It is something we'll have to commit to provide.

Lane Tredger: I appreciate that. I would like to ask how much has been collected in the last year in late payment charges, disconnection and reconnection fees, and any additional security deposits for customers who are behind on their bills.

Jay Massie: I could say for the late payment fees, there have been no fees collected. Really, even prior to last winter, and as a result of COVID, we really had to take away and look at the late payment fees and the structure and what that looks like with our billing issues of last winter. Those were all paused, so there are no late payment fees out there for our customers. The reconnect and disconnect fees — just to clarify the question, that, to me, is if people are moving between places. Is that the number you are looking for?

Lane Tredger: Yes, I was wondering about the disconnection and reconnection fees, either for moving or, I believe — please correct me if I'm wrong — if customers' power is disconnected due to non-payment and they want to start again, there would be a reconnection fee for that service as well. So, I was interested in both of those reasons for those fees.

Jay Massie: Yes, you're correct. If customers are disconnected for non-payment, there is a reconnect fee. There's also a security deposit that is asked for, and that's just for security if they are in arrears. I do not have those numbers, but we can take away to provide some of those numbers.

Joe MacGillivray: For Yukon Energy, we as well had zero late payment fees. Reconnects and disconnects are part of our normal course of business, and so that really just has to do with customers coming and going, and that includes security deposits. We did not disconnect any customers over the past season for late payments, just given the concerns that were out there around billing and accuracy. We did not disconnect.

Lane Tredger: The witness has actually anticipated my next question. So, first, I just want to dig into the pause on the late payments. I think that's a really great initiative, and I want to thank both companies for taking the initiative to do that. Could they clarify on what date they paused the collection of late payment fees? How long is that pause expected to last?

Just so I really make sure I understand: The collection of those late payment fees has not been delayed; it has been waived for the time that it's paused. I'm hoping they can clarify that for me as well.

Jay Massie: Yes, I can confirm that they're waived permanently. They're not sitting in abeyance or anything like that. They are waived. They have been waived — the late payment fees — since late 2024. So, since that time, they have been waived

and put on hold or put on pause, and really for ATCO, once we're through this billing audit and have looked at the outcome and how that is going, we'll review when they get instituted somewhere down the road.

Joe MacGillivray: At Yukon Energy, we have waived our late fees as well, and we've had no late fees since the new billing system came into force three years ago.

Lane Tredger: Thank you for those clarifications. The Yukon Energy witnesses have said that they have not disconnected anyone, I believe, in the last year for late payments. Could ATCO share how many, if any, customers have been disconnected in the last year for non-payment of their bills?

Jay Massie: No, we don't have that number in front of us. We know there have been customers that have been disconnected for non-payment. We don't have that number in front of us though.

Lane Tredger: Could the witness commit to returning with that number in writing?

Jay Massie: Apologies. I forgot that part of your question in the first part. Yes, we can commit to providing that number.

Lane Tredger: I'm going to move now to discuss the audit that's happening, and I may come back if we have more time at the end, but I do want to talk quite a bit about the audit.

First, to quote from one of the updates from ATCO Electric Yukon, it said that the audit is being conducted — and the quote is: "… at our expense rather than that of Yukon ratepayers." I'm wondering if they can give detail on what exactly that means. Where will the money for that audit come from? Will it be applied to future rate applications, and if not, by what mechanism will it be excluded?

Jay Massie: The highlight of it is that it will not be passed on to ratepayers. Our belief, of course, is that we own the billing system issue. We own the audit that is to review it and look at corrective actions. Really, it will give us suggestions for improvement. That again is not something we think that should be passed on to ratepayers. So, that is at ATCO's cost.

How do we look at it in the future when we go before the Utilities Board? So, when we go as a utility before the Utilities Board, all our costs are before the board in that public forum — everything we spend money on. And I guess that will be the time that the Utilities Board will be able to see clearly that those costs are not included at any time in our revenue requirement.

Joe MacGillivray: I just wanted to note that Yukon Energy has about 2,300 of the 23,000 or 24,000 residential customers in the territory that we service.

We have taken concrete steps over the past several months to improve billing accuracy and to support customers and restore confidence in our billing system and practices. We are manually reviewing every customer bill before it's issued to identify and correct potential errors. We are providing in-person billing support through community visits and working directly with customers to resolve account issues. We're supporting the independent third-party audit by MNP, and we're providing regular public updates. So, I just wanted to note that.

Lane Tredger: So, the cost for the audit — does that then reduce ATCO Electric Yukon's profits for the year? Is that where that cost shows up in the balance sheet, or is it coming from somewhere else, like perhaps the parent company or some other place?

Jay Massie: It's basically coming out of the parent company. The costs are not borne in the Yukon by ratepayers at all, or by the ATCO company here. There are regulated costs for a utility. Any costs that are regulated or in the regulated books go into rates. Non-regulated costs do not. So, we'll have them separated clearly so they'll be able to be reviewed.

Lane Tredger: Thank you to the witness for that answer.

The September update from ATCO said the goal was to complete the audit before winter, but the November update said that delays were encountered during the process to ensure that all privacy and data protection requirements were properly addressed.

Could the witness talk about what those delays were and elaborate on how they have caused the review to be delayed, and what the new estimated completion date for the audit is?

Jay Massie: Really, back when that update was done in September, that was our meetings with MNP. That's the auditor that is doing the billing review at this time, and that was the goal, really, to have the billing audit done by the time winter sets in.

Really looking at the amount of work that was involved and has happened since then, one of the stats that MNP has shared with us is they have reviewed 20 million billing line items in the system, and they have reconciled all that and they have recalculated that, and it's a lot of work that they have been doing. They have been engaged with us the entire time, asking clarifying questions about the information that we have provided them.

On the privacy front, as we started providing information to MNP, they needed a little more information on customer accounts and customer usage. Really, we had to put the firewall of customer privacy between our customers and MNP. That was a lot of extra work in just ensuring that customer privacy was put in place. We also engaged with Yukon Energy for their privacy needs. They are a bit different from ATCO's needs, so there was quite a longer conversation on ensuring the customer privacy was kept in place while this audit was being done.

Joe MacGillivray: At Yukon Energy, we needed to ensure that the files that were going to MNP — that the personal information was indeed protected. We need to comply with Yukon ATIPP, and so there were manual redactions that were actually completed, and that did take some time as well.

Lane Tredger: ATCO said that the findings and recommendations of the audit will be made public. I'm wondering how it will be shared publicly. Will it be posted to the website? Shared through Yukon government news releases? I'm also wondering: Will the findings and the recommendations be all of the information that will be produced by the audit, or are there any pieces of information that will come out of the audit that won't be made public?

Jay Massie: I guess the audit or the privacy side of it, yes, it will be made public. It will be made public through our website. We'll post it on our website as MNP gives us their final audit report. It will, of course, have to ensure customer privacy is fully covered for it. We're not foreseeing at this time any of the information that we've provided not being part of that report. I think what we're going to see — again, MNP is the independent auditor. It is up to them. We provide them the information. It is up to them to work on it and provide their report as they see fit. We can't direct it. So, what exactly they are going to have in the report, I can't fully answer.

We are looking to have this report in the coming weeks. I know that, in my last conversation with them, they were feeling they're about 80 percent done through the report. Again, the public access to it will be through our website. I'm unsure if the Utilities Board will ask for a copy in the near future or not, but it will be available through our website anyway.

Lane Tredger: My understanding is that the audit covers from July 2024 to July 2026, and I'm wondering why that period was chosen. Specifically, I understand that the new billing software began in late 2023, and so I'm wondering why the audit does not include the transition period.

Jay Massie: The billing system went live in August of 2023. July 2024 to July 2026 was picked.

Really, that first year of any large transition or integration of software — in this case, a billing system — it goes through an extended stabilization period. Really, with any new software that is updated, of course, there's a learning period and the stabilization period. So, we wanted to be outside of that when we did this audit because there's a lot of work done in that first year to make sure that it was working properly. It was really just to be outside that stabilization period and give a two-year window.

Lane Tredger: One of the concerns I think Yukoners are hoping will be addressed by this audit is that it will be understood if customers have been charged the wrong amounts. And I can understand that the period where the software was first implemented would be different than what would happen later. But I guess I'm wondering: Are the witnesses confident that no one was mischarged during that early period? If not, how could that be looked at through another mechanism since they're excluded from this audit?

Jay Massie: We've had no indication ever of any mischarges in 2023 or any prior year to that. I guess we're going to rely on the billing system calculating that properly. Again, as we look at this billing audit, we totally understand that customers want to know that they were charged properly. We want that also. Really, this billing audit will provide that information.

As I mentioned, MNP — the company that's working on it — has done a review of 20 million line items of billing and they are comparing it to existing meter data in the system, all the rates approved by the Utilities Board, and calculating it out to ensure whether it is right or not. That's, I guess, what we'll wait to see in this report. We have some strong confidence that it was billed properly in the end once we got actual reads for customers' meters. Really, the time that was most concerning that we've heard from customers is when their bills were estimated and they didn't have actual reads.

I can tell you that the meter at their house, residence, business — wherever it is — that meter is the source of truth. It has the meter read number on it. It keeps rolling. It's cumulative, so it's not going to change month to month. It's just going to add on the usage. If they have been estimated for a month, the next month when they get an actual read, that is what they have actually used since the last time it was read. We do have a fair amount of confidence in that. I should say we have absolute confidence in our meters and that they are operating properly.

It's just when the estimates go into the system and that estimate logic wasn't properly accounting for the usage last winter, that really started the concern for us and customers. Again, we completely understand this, and really we are hoping for that same thing out of the audit that it is able to show customers and give them that confidence back that they were properly billed.

Joe MacGillivray: I'm just going to follow up from the YEC perspective.

We are confident as well in the billing system's accuracy. The concern, as Mr. Massie has said, was around estimates. Estimates have caused problems for customers. When there is a correction made though based on an actual meter read, that has been found to be accurate.

I did want to note that even during the MNP audit period, Yukon Energy Corporation staff are willing and available to have questions and concerns raised, and we'll go through a bill account review for customers even during this time while MNP is doing their audit. So, I just wanted to mention that.

I did want to mention as well that meters are regulated by Measurement Canada, and so if there are concerns with meters, there is a process to have meters validated as well.

Lane Tredger: I'm glad that the witnesses have confidence in the billing system. I don't think it would be a surprise to hear that a lot of Yukoners don't right now, and so I feel it's concerning to hear that there's enough concern between 2024 and 2026 to do an audit, but, from what I believe the witnesses said, they're confident in the billing system before that.

So, I guess what I want to understand is what changed between those times that means that there could have been mistakes after 2024, but not before. And maybe my next questions will kind of dig into this a little bit, because I wanted to understand how the billing system software started in August 2023, as per the witnesses. But in the statements from ATCO it said that problems started showing up in December 2025, so more than two years later.

So, I'm wondering what happened in December 2025. Why were the estimates not a problem before then? Why not? Or do these problems in fact date back farther, and people just started really noticing it around that time?

Jay Massie: At no point did I say there was a concern in 2024. Really, we expanded that two-year window for the audit. The reason for this independent audit is really to give customers confidence back in our billing system. That confidence was shaken, and it started last winter.

Prior to that, there were no issues with the billing system, and as you noted, the same estimating tool or logic was in the system, but it was not an issue prior to that. A couple of reasons are that we had regular actual meter reads in the system, and when it did estimate, it wasn't as cold, quite frankly. The genesis or the beginning of the issue was last December in the extreme cold. That extreme cold became an extreme heating load for everybody, and anybody with electric heat had an immense amount of electricity they used last December, and that's when our estimating issues started.

We did not get actual reads. The system estimated those reads, but the estimates were low because it basically takes your annual usage divided by 12 — a very simple calculation that just did not factor in the big differences in seasonal demand in the Yukon, especially for electric heat. It was really amplified again by the extreme cold last December. The heating load was quite a lot in the Yukon. No matter what you heat with — oil or propane or wood — you used a lot last December, and it really amplified the concern or the issue of the low estimates. So, when actual reads did not get in, customers had used a lot of electricity in December because of the cold weather, but they only got billed for a small portion of that. When the true-up started coming in January, that was a big concern for everyone, and that really is what shook their confidence.

So, really, the focus of this billing audit is, again, to unravel and help customers understand what happened last winter with our billing estimates and in the billing system and give them that confidence.

Also, for the period back to August of 2024 or July of 2024, expanding the audit period is just again to provide confidence to customers. Prior to that, it was working fine also.

Lane Tredger: So, my understanding of what the witness said is that we'll see what comes in the audit, but that they believe that there weren't billing issues until an extreme cold event revealed a challenge within the system to do with estimates that then kind of spiraled through the following months, and so they didn't include time before July 2024 in the audit because they don't believe there were billing issues until around December 2025.

If the audit does find that there were issues that predated that cold snap, how would they make sure that customers had been correctly billed going back as far as the system change in 2023?

Jay Massie: I guess that would be circumstantial.

Depending on what the audit finds, we'll follow those recommendations of the independent auditor at that time.

Lane Tredger: So, the first public update I could find from ATCO on their website was in, I believe, June 2026, but it sounds like the problem started as far back as December 2025.

Were there any other public communications around the billing challenges from ATCO between the problems first being identified and June 2026? If not, why not?

Jay Massie: There were communications before that. They were more customer-specific, like our staff talking directly to customers. There were no global updates. I think that is one of the big learnings that we do not need to wait to hear from the independent auditor. Just on the public communication around these issues, we've recognized that, yeah, we can do better at updating the public a little bit sooner. That's 100 percent on me, and we've committed to doing better at that. We've started in June. We've done it every month since then — just updating customers. It's something that we're going to continue to do.

Joe MacGillivray: Madam Chair, I can add for Yukon Energy Corporation that we've been doing monthly updates since June. So, these are monthly billing updates.

We've also had community mailers out prior to that, and e-mails and calls to customers who've been affected. There have been communications going on with customers in addition to those monthly updates.

Lane Tredger: I'm going to pass the floor now to my colleague from the Third Party. I do have many more questions, so I hope to get back on my feet later today. But thank you for the conversation we've had so far, and I will cede the floor.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I would just like to thank ATCO, YDC, and YEC for coming today and answering all our questions. Our questions, the majority of the time, come from Yukoners sending questions in and asking us what's going on and if we can speak for them. It's really good to hear this explanation today in regard to the billing because that's one of the top ones.

I just have a few questions here in regard to last winter with the rolling blackouts. It's also a hot topic because right now it seems like we're having pretty nice weather, but a lot of Yukoners are asking what's going to happen this winter coming, and in regard to the infrastructure and what took place last winter. There was also lots in the news. There were articles. There was some mixed messaging. I'm hoping today that we can get a clear message in regard to what took place.

I would like to ask the witnesses today about the energy infrastructure and how close we were to rolling blackouts last December.

Joe MacGillivray: Thanks for the question. At Yukon Energy in December, we had two different days when we exceeded previous peak demand. We did not have any rolling blackouts, though. We were on the verge, and we were worried that we would have to implement rolling blackouts, but we did not actually move there. We were communicating with the public, though, so that folks could be ready. We were using over 91 percent of our capacity at that time. Due to the hard work of all of the employees at Yukon Energy and at ATCO, we did manage to keep the system up and running.

What I think that did for us is it really pointed out some of the vulnerabilities in the system. We are an isolated northern grid, and we can't rely on anybody else when we hit 90 percent plus. The infrastructure that we have is aging and requires significant repairs and upgrades. We also live in one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada, and new generation assets also need to come online. I think last year really was a period for us to take note and to prepare for what's coming next.

I can tell you that we've done a lot of work for this winter. We've been preparing by adding dependable generation capacity, securing rental diesel generation, strengthening our existing infrastructure, and working to reduce peak electricity demand through our Peak Smart Home program.

This winter we're going to have approximately five megawatts of additional winter capacity compared to last year. To put that into context, when we hit that record peak last year, it was 127 megawatts. Five is a significant number. We've also secured 22 rental diesel units this winter to ensure that we have enough dependable capacity to meet peak demand and for emergency scenarios.

We're also working with government partners to expand our mutual aid program. The Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse have expanded participation in Yukon Energy's mutual aid protocol. We've doubled the amount of electricity demand reduction from 1.4 to 2.8 megawatts for the 2026-27 winter.

There's also been a fair bit of work that's been completed specifically on reliability work on our system. There have been repairs on structures, switches, and transmission lines between Carmacks and Faro, between Whitehorse and Aishihik, and locally in Whitehorse. We have repairs that have happened to diesel units in Dawson, giving us an additional 2.7 megawatts of dependable capacity. We've had significant repairs in Mayo with surge tank and slope repairs there. There have been major overhauls of one of our LNG units as well. There has been significant work that's been undertaken as a result of how close we were last winter to ensure that we are in better condition this winter.

Debra-Leigh Reti: My other question is just to get an explanation. When the minister speaks about a rolling blackout scenario, he uses the LNG plant and Aishihik failing at the same time. Is that a scenario that YEC plans for, and do other utilities plan for two major failures at once?

Joe MacGillivray: Thank you for the question. We do, as our planning criteria are established right now, plan for an N minus one scenario. What that is, is our largest asset, which is Aishihik — 37 megawatts. We plan for it to be down. That can either be due to an issue at the plant or it can be an issue with the transmission line as well, because we don't have transmission redundancy from Aishihik to Whitehorse.

We plan for that 37 megawatts so that we have confidence that we can operate the system when and if Aishihik were not available to us. We did have a situation this past winter where our LNG plant was down. That's 12.4 megawatts. During that time, if we had lost Aishihik, then we truly would have been in a rolling blackout scenario. I believe that's maybe what's being referenced.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness for that explanation. I really appreciate that. Your November 2025 rate application forecast a peak of about 127 megawatts, and that's what we did hit. Was December's peak a surprise to YEC?

Joe MacGillivray: I don't know if the peak was a surprise. I think the extended period of extreme cold weather was not something we have seen in some time. Coupled with the rapid growth within the community and the population and the increasing reliance on electrical heat, that put the system under incredible strain and really pointed out to us how fragile the system can be when we hit those extreme cold temperatures for extended periods of time.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness for explaining that too. Has the YEC control centre ever started rolling outage procedures on the main grid last winter or before?

Joe MacGillivray: I'm not sure. I don't know about a rolling outage procedure, but we have an escalating process that we go through based upon the amount of load that's on the system. We go through different kinds of colour zones within our escalation process where we start by taking industrial customers off, so we curtail industrial customers. We contact our partner ATCO, and we ask them to increase generation and add that to the grid supply. We have a process of going through some

established government partners and having them start up local generation that takes them off of the grid, and so we do have this escalating process that results in reductions, kind of continuous reductions over time, on the grid.

When we hit 90 percent of our capacity on the grid, we start thinking about the potential of rolling blackouts. We were at 91 percent last year. We had conversations happening with the Emergency Measures Organization and with other partners, but we did not hit the point that we had to trigger those.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank the Lord that we didn't have to do that. Has YEC done a review of last December, and if so, will that be made public?

Joe MacGillivray: I would not say that we have done a formal review, but we have spent a great deal of time looking at what occurred last year, formulating learnings from that, and then coming up with a plan for the current year. What we found last year has changed the models that we use for planning because extreme temperatures below minus 40 actually were a little bit colder than we were actually planning for at the time, but they have also really informed us on what it is that we need to do going forward.

Like I say, the reliability capital projects were escalated within our capital plan this year so that we could focus the monies where they would have the best impact for the coming year, and we have increased things like brushing to reinforce the transmission infrastructure that we have. Danger trees and those types of things do have a tendency to increase their impact in the winter months when it's super cold.

We've also been looking this year at fuel supply. As you're all aware, every ounce of fuel that is used in the territory is trucked to the territory. We are looking at trying to improve fuel supply both on the diesel and the LNG side of things, but we're also looking at having an extra rental. This would be in addition to the 22 diesel rentals that we have. We're looking at having an extra one in Whitehorse that would not be operating at the time, but should we have a diesel unit go down and it's not able to be maintained and up and running quickly, we would have the ability to bring that extra rental unit in to replace it.

Yes, there's been a lot of reflection, I think, on winter 2026 and what we can do to improve the system for winter 2027.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness for those answers. It's good to hear there's a plan, and I think a lot of people are just kind of bracing themselves if this weather is going to change.

Just a question — I'm not sure if I heard this answer previously with my colleague — in regard to the smart meter project. Where are we at with that? I've had a lot of questions lately about it. Some people have it. Are we getting it? What's going on with communities as well?

Tony Badry: I can answer that question. As far as our deployment goes so far, the northern communities have been completed: Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Beaver Creek, Old Crow, Stewart Crossing, Pelly, Ross River. We're working our way south, so we're in Whitehorse as well, deploying, and we'll work toward the southern lakes with project completion at the end of 2028.

Joe MacGillivray: As I said earlier, we have about 2,300 customers that we service directly in Dawson City, Faro, and Mayo. We are a little bit behind ATCO in the rollout of AMI. We're watching as they roll out and getting some lessons learned from their deployment.

In 2027, work is going to include detailed design and the development of the comms network to support the implementation. We have actual meter installations expected to begin in 2028, and the funding that ATCO actually received for AMI implementation does not cover our costs. Right now, Yukon Energy anticipates that our AMI rollout is going to be about $2.9 million, and that those costs will be spread between 2027 and 2029, when we complete our rollout.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness for that explanation. I'm glad that my community is completed now too.

I've been reviewing the Yukon Energy road map documents, and it seems to me that much of the work that has been announced this last year was planned and discussed in these documents. Can the witnesses tell me when YEC or YDC first identified each of the projects that are now being talked about as the Arctic Sovereignty Grid Plan? For reference, these are Mayo, Atlin, and the power centre. Were all three in chapter 1 already?

Joe MacGillivray: I can respond to a portion of that. Anyway, I can tell you that work in Mayo began as a result of an assessment that was done in 2023 of the Wareham spillway. There was also work on the slope stabilization and the surge chamber there that I believe started later in 2022. We are just at the point right now where we're completing the slope stabilization and surge chamber replacement in Mayo. That project was slightly over $100 million, and that will be completed prior to year-end.

Whitehorse Power Centres work has been underway since 2024, and I can tell you that we have had involvement in Atlin, in that we completed an energy purchase agreement with them in 2022, and it went to the Utilities Board for approval. Those are the dates that I have, but clearly there was work happening on some of those prior.

Shane Andre: Sorry, just to add to that. I would say that while many of those projects — or all of those projects — have been contemplated in the past, the collection of those projects as part of the Arctic Sovereignty Grid Plan was really part of a broader initiative by the Yukon government and Yukon Energy to really focus on projects that we felt were of significant priority and that needed to be advanced as soon as possible. In some ways it was really part of a strategy to engage the federal

government in a focused discussion around funding. While those projects certainly were contemplated, they weren't new ideas. It was in early 2026 when we started referring specifically to those three projects as part of a plan.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Are there any generation projects in YEC's current plans that weren't already in chapter 1?

Joe MacGillivray: Oh, I don't believe so. I think that most of what we're working on this year, at least, was in the plan.

Debra-Leigh Reti: The rate application had phase 1 in service before the end of 2027, and it's now in 2028. What caused that delay?

Joe MacGillivray: I'm sorry. Could I ask if you could repeat that question?

Debra-Leigh Reti: I'm going to skip that one because I think I might have my numbers incorrect. I apologize for that.

Chapter 1 said phase 1 would reuse existing rental units. My questions are: Why switch to buy new generators? What does that add to the cost? And have they been ordered yet?

Joe MacGillivray: Rental generators within our fleet right now were intended to be short term and to be replaced by permanent generation at some point in time. The rental generators are actually more expensive to operate than permanent generation is, although permanent generation, as you've mentioned, does have a capital cost up front. But over the life cycle of the assets, rental generators are more expensive to operate. We do want to move to a position where we have permanent generation or mobile generators, so not rentals but mobiles that we would own that provide us some flexibility to move capacity around the territory as well. We do envision there being replacements with permanent generation.

I mentioned earlier that we have an extra 5.2 megawatts in Whitehorse. Those two generators were just commissioned this fall. That was the last install that we had. That was part of our thermal replacement project that we had, which was 16.5 megawatts between the Callison area and Faro and Whitehorse.

We are working right now on the Whitehorse Power Centres and looking at long-lead items that we need to purchase. We're in the environmental assessment process right now. We have assessed both diesel and LNG generation, or we plan to assess both. We have been ordering long-lead items, and those long-lead items right now have primarily been transformers.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Chapter 1 put Mayo at $200 million or more, but in April the minister said it was roughly $400 million for Mayo. What is the current estimate and what changed?

Joe MacGillivray: I believe that the $200 million in the planning document that you're referencing was just for the spillway.

We have a suite of projects that are happening in Mayo. As I've referenced previously, it starts with the slope remediation project and the surge chamber replacement project which are just wrapping up. We have the Wareham spillway, which, as we said at the time, was referenced as $200 million. It will be slightly more than that is our anticipation by the time we finish. We also have the Mayo plant, which is at the bottom of the slope, that needs to be replaced, and now the Mayo Lake control structure.

We don't have all of these firmly priced out, but the work that would be undertaken is in excess of $400 million.

Debra-Leigh Reti: The recent federal budget named Mayo upgrades, the Atlin hydro project, and the power centres.

How much new funding for each project is contained in the federal budget?

Shane Andre: At this time, we don't have exact numbers from the federal government. We're very happy to have seen those projects named in the budget. We worked very hard to prioritize those projects and define them as priorities for the Yukon. We're very happy to see them along with the significant dollars associated with northern energy projects. We're feeling very positively about it, but we're still working with the federal government to finalize and understand exactly what dollars will be assigned to which projects.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I just have a few questions in regard to diesel costs. How much diesel and LNG did the YEC burn last winter, and what did it cost compared with what's in the rates?

Joe MacGillivray: I don't have the exact numbers at my fingertips, but I'm working from memory, so bear with me.

I think that we did burn more diesel and more LNG last year. I believe it was 24 million litres of diesel and 21 million litres of LNG.

We currently have a diesel price of $1.15 in our rate through the GRA. As of October, we are paying $2.30 for diesel, so we've seen an absolute 100-percent increase in our diesel costs, and our volumes also have increased.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I'm not sure if this one was answered previously, but if the witness can just share: How many rental generators are there this year?

Joe MacGillivray: We have 22 rental generators. There are 10 in Whitehorse, seven in Faro, and five more in Mayo. Then we have one hot standby as well. There's actually 23.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness. Recognizing the risk of getting all of our diesel from Skagway, are you working on plans for backup diesel supply?

Joe MacGillivray: I do want to correct those numbers. Actually, I was working from memory with those numbers, and I was so close. It was 21 million litres of diesel and 25 million litres of LNG. We get about 70 percent of our fuel through Skagway.

We do work with local suppliers, so they have significant volumes in Whitehorse, and it's our understanding that they are looking to expand. We are looking, though, for alternative options around supply just so that we have some redundancy and some resilience going forward.

We are, of course, the only LNG user in the territory, and we have only three days of fuel on site, so we know that puts us at risk, especially during winter when there's potential for road closures. That is something that we are working on quite aggressively right now. Right now, we get 100 percent of our LNG from southern Canada, but we are looking at other options.

Shane Andre: Just to follow on the excellent work that Yukon Energy is doing in this space through the winter reliable energy plan, the Yukon government is conducting a fuel security adequacy assessment where we're looking at the supply chain, storage, and distribution for all liquid fuels used for electricity generation, heating, and transportation in the territory. We recognize this. This was very much one of the learnings from last winter: not just how vulnerable our electrical system was, but how vulnerable the territory was to energy shortages broadly, including liquid fuels. It's a big part of the work we're doing right now through the winter reliable energy plan, and we hope to have the results of that work as part of our planning exercise in 2027.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Can the witnesses share what this winter's fuel prices will add to consumers' bills?

Joe MacGillivray: As I mentioned earlier, we know that our price has increased significantly.

Everybody sees it at the pumps. We did have a one-percent fuel rider that came into place earlier in the fall. We can't predict what this year's prices will be, but we provide pricing information to the Utilities Board on a quarterly basis, and that's how the calculations are done. I think prices seem to have peaked and maybe are coming back down, but again, we can't predict at this point in time.

Debra-Leigh Reti: What share of last year's generation was renewable, and what will that share be once the power centres are running?

Joe MacGillivray: We have three hydro facilities in the territory that we've relied on and benefited from for many years.

They were constructed back in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Over the course of the past 25 years, we have over 90 percent of our electricity that's generated through hydro, so renewable generation.

Last year, though, we saw a steep decline in that. Just looking at that single year, we were at 73 percent hydro. This was due in part to low water in Aishihik. Aishihik is our only winter water battery, so we're able to store water in Aishihik and use it over multiple years. Aishihik went through several years of low refill, so we didn't have access to Aishihik as we had hoped last year. We had extreme cold weather in December and a cold spring, and so all of that means that we relied more heavily on our thermal resources. The result is that we generated less hydroelectricity.

I did want to just make one correction. I said that the fuel rider had a 1-percent increase. It was a one-cent-per-kilowatt-hour increase.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Thank you to the witness for that. What fuel prices does the power centre's business case assume over its life, and what happens to rates if the diesel stays where it is?

Joe MacGillivray: When these estimates are done, there is a long-term average for fuel prices that's utilized. The extreme increase that we're seeing today due to the geopolitical concerns that are out there is dampened when we look at the long-term averages. We're also, as I mentioned earlier, assessing both diesel and LNG, and there will be further analysis of the two fuel sources and what those long-term costs will be.

We are building the Whitehorse Power Centres project out in phases. We're starting with the south centre located on Copper Haul Road. We're going to build up to 60 megawatts of capacity there, and then we'll have a further 90 at the north site. There is potential to use different fuel sources at different sites as well.

Debra-Leigh Reti: YDC said that intermittent projects were cancelled or paused? Which ones were cancelled, and how many megawatts? Who made that decision?

Shane Andre: I'm not aware of any projects that were cancelled. It is absolutely true that the IPP program as well as the microgeneration program have been paused, and those pauses were put in place so as to ensure the stability of the grid, recognizing that there were some concerns from the utilities. The Yukon government and the Yukon Development Corporation are very actively working with the utilities now to understand those challenges and find a path forward. But I'm not aware of any cancelled projects.

Debra-Leigh Reti: My last question, just in this area here, is: What is the status of the integrated resource plan that YDC said it was working on, and will this be public?

Shane Andre: Thank you for the question. The integrated resource plan is a very active and live file for the Yukon Development Corporation. It's one of our priority activities right now, working alongside Yukon Energy and ATCO and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. For starters, we are looking to understand where loads are going in the territory as a starting point for a comprehensive electrical supply plan that can guide us for the next 25 years.

I would add that we recently launched the Power Potential Portal, and that is an exercise in inviting First Nation governments, the private sector, and other interested parties who might have electricity-generating projects that they would like to advance to bring those projects forward for consideration in our IRP exercise and in our long-term plans.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Just in regard to generation options, which winter options does YEC see as realistic within the next 10 years?

Joe MacGillivray: Right now, we are focusing heavily on Whitehorse Power Centres. The Whitehorse Power Centres really are a capacity project for us. We don't envision using Whitehorse Power Centres 12 months of the year. This is going to help us supplement in the winter months when we struggle to meet peak. It will be those Whitehorse Power Centres fuelled by either diesel or LNG that we're focusing on over what is actually a 10-year time frame.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I just have a couple of questions here in regard to grid-connect. How much has been spent to date? And have any engineering and environmental contracts been awarded?

Shane Andre: To this point, $2.7 million has been spent on the grid-connect project. There have been contracts awarded for some of the initial planning work. I don't know that it would fit the description the member offered around contracting, but there certainly have been contracting resources that we've hired to help us move the project forward to this point.

Debra-Leigh Reti: The Premier says the government's focus has shifted. Has YDC been told to either slow down or change its work?

Shane Andre: Certainly, the Yukon Development Corporation is continuing to investigate the feasibility of the grid-connect project, recognizing that there's a significant opportunity here. I would say there has been a change in leadership and perhaps a change in style in the approach to the project. I think we are certainly cautiously reviewing what the opportunity is, and in the context of broader options as well, looking to see what the best fit is for the territory into the future, recognizing that there are significant implications of the choices that we make.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Have there been any conversations with affected First Nations in BC or in the Yukon?

Shane Andre: Yes, there are ongoing discussions taking place with First Nation governments, both in and outside of the territory, on this project and on energy opportunities broadly.

I'll take this opportunity to highlight that we've recently reached out to all Yukon First Nations in an effort to explore energy planning and new energy projects and offered a transfer payment agreement, a funding opportunity of $250,000 each for those governments to participate and explore energy electricity development projects and participate in energy planning with Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon government.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Just to lead up to this question in regard to your answer, is there a signed agreement with Carcross/Tagish First Nation for the line through its territory? If not, how is that project shovel-ready?

Shane Andre: Sorry, I might have missed the question. I think it's in reference to the Atlin project, perhaps.

I would just say that the Atlin project is not a Yukon government or Yukon Energy Corporation developed project. The proponent for that project is the Taku River Tlingit. I honestly couldn't speak to the specifics of where that project's at, but certainly we're keenly interested in the project and see a lot of benefits and opportunities for the Yukon.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I apologize. I was connecting a previous answer to one of my questions, so thank you for that.

One of my last questions here is: You said that's not a Yukon government project; it's with Taku River Tlingit. Is there a written agreement with Carcross on this project at all, any that you're aware of?

Shane Andre: I don't know the details of the relationship between Taku River Tlingit and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation with regard to this project; sorry.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Madam Chair, those are my questions for today. I'll pass it back to my colleague.

Carmen Gustafson: I just wanted to go back to some of the first questions that my colleague asked regarding rates. Could the witnesses let us know what the base rate for electricity for residential customers is, and then what the total overall rate is that we're paying per kilowatt hour?

Jay Massie: Maybe I'll start. What I'm looking at is the rate schedule that we have on our website and the Utilities Board's website. I'll say clearly, this is one of the challenges with boiling or simplifying a bill down to one rate. In the Yukon, we have three energy blocks with different rates in them. The first energy block is zero to 1,000 kilowatt hours, and that rate is 12.14 cents. The second block is from 1,001 to 2,500 kilowatt hours. That's 12.82 cents. Then anything over 2,500 kilowatt hours is

13.99 cents. Depending on what the customer uses for kilowatt hours and what block they land in, it gets calculated on those numbers. Then, of course, all the riders are attached thereafter — ours, ATCO's Rider R, Yukon Energy's Rider J, as well as any of the temporary ones and the fuel riders.

I would say that if there is a specific usage, we can plug that into the calculator if you have that, and boil that down to an average cost. Or anybody can do that on our website where this bill calculator sits. You can put in any amount of energy that you use and it will calculate that for you.

Joe MacGillivray: Just to add — I believe that the energy charge is 28.9 cents per kilowatt hour for the first 1,000 kilowatt hours. That's all riders included.

Carmen Gustafson: I was hoping to get that overall cost. At 28.9 cents per kilowatt hour, how does that rate compare to other jurisdictions in Canada?

Joe MacGillivray: We do operate an isolated northern grid. I can tell you that those rates are lower than in the other two territories and higher than in most of the provinces.

Carmen Gustafson: Thank you, and I do understand there are reasons why our rates would be significantly more than other jurisdictions, but I think it's helpful to understand in comparison to the rest of Canada what our electricity costs are. Are any of the witnesses aware if there's sort of a guideline or standard that would define an affordable price for electricity for a Canadian consumer?

Joe MacGillivray: I'm not aware of an affordability assessment that has been done, but I will mention that different homes rely differently on electricity and electrification, and there is a significant difference when you heat your home with electricity versus heating with another fuel source. It's a very difficult one to come up with a good comparison.

Having said that, we understand that affordable electricity is key and that Yukoners indeed — especially given the cold winter that we had — were struggling with the cost of electricity. It is definitely a factor that we're taking into account as we build additional resources going forward. That's why we're aggressively pursuing federal and Yukon government funding opportunities and grants for us so that we can have the generation that we need for tomorrow, and we can keep the costs of maintaining the infrastructure that we have today out of rates as much as possible.

Carmen Gustafson: I do want to say that I appreciate the witness's answer and that it reflects that Yukoners are struggling with the cost of electricity, and that they are trying to do things to address that and to find ways to address that cost to ratepayers. I do appreciate that.

I have some questions about planning. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin asked similar questions as well. But I am curious about how all of the parties — YEC, YDC, ATCO, EMR — how everybody works together on planning for the grid, what their respective areas of jurisdiction or focus are — whether that's demand forecasting, infrastructure replacement or upgrade needs, addressing demand-side management, expansions to address industrial loads potentially coming online — sort of the whole kit and caboodle. Who's responsible for what part, and how is it integrated and implemented?

Shane Andre: It's a really excellent question, and I think that it speaks to the heart of some of the work that we are doing with the Yukon Development Corporation right now. This government has given us clear direction to look at the governance structure within the energy space, particularly with a view to the role of YDC and how it interacts with YEC. We're very much focused on that exercise right now, but in the meantime, we really recognize the importance of planning.

At the moment, the way we are focusing this — and I think we're working really well together — is that Yukon Development Corporation and EMR are taking a bit of a leadership role on the load projection exercises and understanding that high-level space around the economic growth of the territory, and working collaboratively with the utilities — really particularly with Yukon Energy — on defining how that future piece will work and really avoiding any duplication of effort, while at the same time, ensuring that the analysis is robust and consistent.

Joe MacGillivray: Just to add to that: Yukon Energy is focusing on the dependability and reliability of the grid and the generating assets that we have. In the short term, as we've said, over five to 10 years, the Whitehorse Power Centres is going to be a major focus for us. We're focusing on that shorter term, the reliability and dependability of the grid, and the assets that we have, while government partners are focusing more on the long term.

Jay Massie: On the grid, ATCO is mostly wires. We definitely have been coordinating for a very long time with Yukon Energy.

Just on the planning within the communities: We work with the City of Whitehorse and different government departments to understand where the next subdivisions will be built and how much they plan on building. We flow those projections between our two utilities. We rely on each other's rate applications where you can see a little more long-range planning of the projects that are in front of us, and we very much coordinate fairly well on that.

I would say that in our isolated communities where we provide generation and wires, we communicate with the municipality or the community and the First Nation governments on any of the bigger projects that they have planned in the coming years. It just helps us plan and project our generation and any of the development that we need in the community. It's a bit of engaging

externally with the different organizations that actually build subdivisions and big centres in communities and sharing that with Yukon Energy, and then in those communities, it's more the community and the First Nations.

Carmen Gustafson: I'm going to ask the next part. I don't miss an opportunity to throw a minister under a bus, but I would like to avoid throwing any of the witnesses under a bus, and I'm genuinely not trying to throw anybody under any buses. Yukoners have suggested that some of the issues with the electricity system right now were pretty foreseeable. They were included in some previous plans. There may have been some surprises, but we've known about the increase in demand for a while, and we've had plans before about what to do in terms of building for the future of our electricity grid.

I guess my question is really: How is the current planning iteration going to be different and result in a different outcome for Yukoners?

Shane Andre: It's an excellent question. I think there are some significant lessons that we've learned over the past several years about what can and cannot work, and I think one of the lessons that we are trying to implement right now is that, rather than starting with project solutions and trying to advance projects and seek support from stakeholders and First Nation government partners, and others, we are looking at doing a call-out to First Nation governments, the private sector, and others to see what projects they might have that they can bring to the table. I think in this way, this is a sort of unique approach that's significantly different from what we've tried in the past and has some real potential to show success where perhaps we've stumbled in the past.

By looking to First Nation governments in particular as leaders in the space to advance projects, our hope is that we will have much greater success in bringing projects to completion. That's one of the ways that we are tweaking things.

I would also circle back to the governance discussions and efficiencies that we are working through as well, recognizing that there are probably some improvements there that we can implement.

Carmen Gustafson: I do appreciate those answers about planning. I might come back to that, but I'm going to skip back to some questions that I had specifically for the witnesses from ATCO, and that was with respect to the news from October about the merger between ATCO and Emera. I'm hoping that the witnesses can explain how that may affect ATCO Electric Yukon.

Jay Massie: I guess in the long run, it really doesn't affect Yukon ratepayers, I would say. It's a big merger between two big Canadian energy companies. I might be a little biased, but I think it's a good news story of Canadian energy being a little more sovereign, and the combination of the two energy companies does look quite good for Canada.

What it means for us really is — we are less than half of a percent of that organization, as ATCO Electric Yukon — we do not foresee any changes whatsoever. Our chief regulatory officer has already sent information into the Yukon Utilities Board saying as much. Each of the companies across Canada affected by this merger has had to apply to or notify its regulator. On October 29, I was in a hearing in Yellowknife for the power company there. There were similar questions and the same answer. There will be no effect on Yukon ratepayers at this time. The merger is set to close sometime mid to late 2027. I'm sure there will be some more news between now and then, but what we have planned for has no effect on Yukoners.

Carmen Gustafson: The witness mentioned how small ATCO Electric Yukon is compared to ATCO, so I assume we'll be even smaller in this merger between two very large companies. I think the news said that it is potentially the largest merger in Canadian history. Is there any concern that ATCO Electric Yukon is just too small or doesn't provide enough returns to this larger company and is there a risk that it would be sold off as an asset to somebody else later down the road? I know that's a little bit hypothetical, but I think it's maybe a concern that some Yukoners have.

Jay Massie: Yeah, it's pretty hard to answer the hypothetical question. Long story short, I don't know the answer if it could change in the end or not. I think one of the things to think about that works for us — Tony and me and the rest of the team — is being part of ATCO, we are a small part of a big company, for sure, but it's a big utility company. The benefits we receive are that we get access to their supply chain management professionals down south — engineers, accountants. We get to use their construction standards to build power lines and their safety standards. There's a lot of governance and policy that we are able to access that is based on industry best practices. All are things we need that we have access to going forward, and that we don't have to build, which is a big benefit. I don't see that changing with the merger. Could things change in the future? The merger announcement was made on October 6, I believe. I can tell you on October 5, I had no idea that was happening. Things could change, but I just don't know.

Carmen Gustafson: I guess we'll see how it goes. Is there also potential for ATCO Electric Yukon to have greater access to capital or access to lower-cost capital due to the merger?

Jay Massie: I would say that through Canadian Utilities, we are able to access their debt and capital. They are — whatever the rating is, it's a fairly high rating in the debt market as is. I don't know what Emera's is, but I don't know if you can get a much better debt or borrowing rating than we have now. But if it's available, I am sure we will get that.

Carmen Gustafson: I'm just going to go back to the theme of planning a little bit, and this is with respect to the mining industry. We hear a lot of talk about potential demand on the grid from mines coming online. But I was quite surprised — at Geoscience, I had a few conversations with people in leadership positions in mining companies who were quite excited about potential opportunities to help provide capacity or some assistance actually to the grid. I wonder if Yukon Energy or Yukon

Development Corporation witnesses could speak to any conversations around potential for feed-in to the grid from mining projects.

Shane Andre: I think that there is significant opportunity for private sector entities to be part of this solution, and we're very open to that. I think that is very much part of the planning exercise that we're participating in right now. It's meant to give us a better understanding of what the load growth is, both in the residential and industrial space, but also to understand what the opportunities are. I mentioned the power portal, of course, but we're equally interested in engaging with industry around potential opportunities there as well.

Joe MacGillivray: I would just add that I think we are open to creative solutions going forward. We actually have had conversations with Selkirk Copper about the potential for them to feed back into the system. That would be part of our planning for critical need over the next two winters before we have Whitehorse Power Centres up and running. So, we have had some of those conversations already.

Carmen Gustafson: The discussions that I had were largely around using propane for electricity generation, and there were some discussions around propane generation and its benefits. I was curious whether using propane for generation, perhaps at the Whitehorse Power Centres, has been explored. If not, why not? Is it actually a terrible idea? I'm asking about the use of propane as opposed to diesel or LNG.

Joe MacGillivray: There was an assessment of different fuel types in the lead-up to the Whitehorse Power Centres. We have chosen at this point in time to proceed through the environmental assessment process with diesel and LNG. There's a variety of reasons for that, but we did assess a broader suite of fuel types.

Lane Tredger: Thank you to the witnesses. I'm excited to get back in with a few more questions before we wrap up the day. I wanted to start by asking a question of ATCO. I'm especially aware that it's a relatively unique chance to ask them questions, and I'll be able to ask more questions of Yukon Energy and Yukon Development Corporation this spring.

What were ATCO Electric Yukon's profits for 2025, and how were they calculated?

Jay Massie: I guess I would start with some important context when you say "profits". The term in the utility industry is "return on equity". Every utility in North America has a return on equity. It's no different for Yukon Energy. They have a different ROE than ATCO, but all utilities have a return on equity for their investment.

If the question was for 2025, our approved percentage of ROE — and I just have the percentages — the Utilities Board approved our ROE at 9.5 percent, and the actual that we achieved in 2025 was 6.4 percent.

Lane Tredger: I know 2026 is not quite complete yet. Does the witness have any estimates of what it will be for 2026?

Jay Massie: Again, it's still approved at 9.5 percent until we go in to see the regulator again. It may or may not change, but for 2026, it's still a forecast. Looking forward to the end of the year, it does not look like we'll achieve 9.5 percent. I don't know what that number is because it relies heavily on temperature, of all things, which is tough to guess between now and the end of the year.

Lane Tredger: Do the executives of Yukon Energy or ATCO Electric Yukon receive compensation related to performance or any outcomes — for example, bonuses?

Jay Massie: Yes, part of our salary is discretionary. It is tied to the performance of the company on a number of different metrics — we say it all the time — for utilities: safe, reliable — so, reliability, performance of the company, the health and safety metrics of the company, and the financial performance. Yes, we are tied to the performance of the utility.

Lane Tredger: Among those metrics, do they include billing accuracy or customer service metrics?

Jay Massie: The quick answer is no, they do not. But I have a sinking feeling my supervisor might change that going forward.

Lane Tredger: Did ATCO executives receive bonuses or discretionary compensation in 2025?

Jay Massie: Yes, part of our salary for 2025, yes, was paid.

Lane Tredger: Has it been decided if those bonuses will be paid for 2026 yet?

Jay Massie: They have not been set, or I have not been told of anything there.

I think the other important context — again, the member calls them "bonuses" — but they are part of our salary. They are discretionary, which means there are years where we did not hit our targets and we did not get paid. That happens. We are performance-based, and if that doesn't happen, we feel it.

The other thing I would say is that our salaries and our compensation — again, this is part of what we file before the Utilities Board — it's really publicly debated and it's public information in there. When we go before the Utilities Board, we really have to prove that all of our workers — our labour force — is paid in the utility market, energy sector, as well as factoring in the North

that we are in. That whole market for labour resources is something that is factored in before the Utilities Board. This is not just something that we do and does not get looked at. I would say this is a healthy debate in every rate application that I've been a part of.

Lane Tredger: I appreciate the answers, and I know that discussing salaries is an uncomfortable topic. It's something we have a bit of a social taboo around, and I think it's fair around discussing personal finances in general. Unfortunately, a lot of Yukoners, as they have struggled with their electricity bills, have had to really overcome that in order to advocate for change. Yukoners have done things like brought us or brought other elected officials their electricity bills and showed how much they are being charged and what sort of cost that had for their households, which was also, I'm sure, very uncomfortable for a lot of them. I know it's often a taboo topic, but I think it's important that, as Yukoners have overcome that to advocate, that we do the same.

I'm wondering — in 2025, what was the total amount of bonuses paid to local executives at ATCO Electric Yukon, and what did that average out to per executive? And were those reduced because of the billing and customer service problems that started in 2025?

Jay Massie: I agree. I'm fine talking and having this conversation. Again, I'm a multigenerational Yukoner. I've been here a while, and I completely understand the affordability concerns of Yukoners. It is a key concern that we put into our business on a daily and weekly basis.

I don't know if it's fair to talk about our labour force and our market as a concern of affordability. Again, we go before the Utilities Board. We provide a market survey of utilities across Canada, across the North. We can say it is difficult to attract and retain employees. That is one indication that we have before the Utilities Board of how we are in the labour market — to prove that there are no exorbitant payment structures, payment fees, or anything like that here. It is what we need to keep a qualified, competent labour force working to keep the lights safe and reliable.

Again, on the concern for affordability — 100 percent, we are there and we understand it. I just don't think it's fair to focus on labour costs for the utilities as part of that.

Lane Tredger: I think the witnesses made a compelling case about why that discretionary remuneration is important, and some Yukoners may find that very compelling and some Yukoners may not. I think it's up to them to make that value judgment, as the Utilities Board will do when they file. But I do think it's a conversation that Yukoners should be able to consider and decide for themselves whether they think those are appropriate numbers or compensation packages.

Can the witness provide how much was paid in bonuses in 2025 to executives of ATCO Electric Yukon, and approximately what that worked out to per person? And were those amounts reduced because of the customer billing errors that began in 2025?

Jay Massie: When I think of the conversation that we've had and the evidence that we put forward in a Utilities Board hearing, there is a privacy concern that has held that information back. Again, we give a broad context of our labour overall — our labour costs — to the Utilities Board as a lump sum. We do not single out people or groups of people, especially in the small community. So, no, I cannot provide that.

Lane Tredger: How many staff at ATCO have their compensation tied to performance in the form of a bonus or discretionary remuneration?

Jay Massie: As I said in my opening statement, we have about 70 employees, and I believe it's about 10 who are in management positions.

Lane Tredger: I do think it's a very fair question: How much of the money that came to ATCO from Yukoners then went to discretionary compensation in a year when they experienced pretty significant concerns that really disrupted their household budgets in a huge way? I think that is a fair question for them to know how much of that money then went to rewarding the executives who oversaw that.

It doesn't sound like I'm going to get an answer on that because of the privacy concerns for those 10 management positions, but I think a question I can ask without any privacy concerns is: Were those bonuses reduced because of the billing and customer service problems that happened in 2025?

Jay Massie: Again, these billing issues were in 2026 — right? The estimates started in 2025 — December; that cold spell. The first billing period is 2026, so it did not affect 2025, because that year was done. So, 2026 — yeah, I expect to have some good conversations about it at the end of the year.

Lane Tredger: Actually, that brings me to my next point, which was about this billing issue that started in December 2025.

Just to confirm — the witness has said that, to the best of his knowledge, the sole cause of the billing issues that Yukoners experienced originated with the cold snap in December 2025 and cascading effects due to the way the new system did estimates. Is that correct?

Jay Massie: It really was focused around the estimations — right? — so, the estimated billing periods. So, not actual reads, but estimated reads. A key part of that was, yes, the cold weather — the extreme and heavy snowfall made accessibility and the ability to get actual reads from our people out there a little more difficult. Yeah, it's kind of, again, tied together in that

perfect storm of events. The base reason is that there were actual reads that were not put in or made into the system, so the system estimated the reads. That was the start.

Lane Tredger: On the Yukon Utilities Board website, there are a number of complaint e-mails — correspondence between customers, the Utilities Board and ATCO Electric regarding this.

The very first one listed is an e-mail from December 18, 2025, from JN — the name is redacted for that person's privacy. In the correspondence back and forth, it became clear that there was a pretty significant billing problem that happened in Whistle Bend starting in November of 2025 that had to do with the length of billing cycles. What I understand from the correspondence is that ATCO Electric Yukon has acknowledged that because the billing cycles were shorter or longer due to meter reads, then another series of errors happened, such as being charged for higher tiers of usage than you would have if they had been billed in 30- or 31-day segments.

That doesn't seem to have anything to do with the cold weather, as far as I can tell. I actually am not clear why that problem may not have pre-existed November and gone back quite a bit further. I'm trying to reconcile that with what the witness said about the problems not starting until December 2025. I'll pass back the floor for comment.

Jay Massie: If you look on the Utilities Board website, there should be some more information about that billing cycle 10 incident which was in Whistle Bend — the one that you're referring to. The Utilities Board asked us a series of questions about it. Really, the point is that this was a separate incident with the billing system that was not the same as the estimates in December.

That incident was a software update overnight for AMI meters. It happened on billing cycle 10. It affected 812 customers in Whistle Bend, and when that software update went in that night, it just issued a bill that night to all those customers. Unfortunately, they were only 18 days into their billing cycle, so they got a bill for 18 days. The next month, we had to true that up. Of course, our goal is to have bills pretty close to 30 days in length. So, 18 days over two months, of course, leaves another 42 days of billing for the next bill to catch up, because that billing cycle again was only 18 days long. That next billing cycle was in December. Of course, that happened in that perfect storm of events, so those 42 days were when customers used a lot of electricity for their heating in that December. The 42 days of high usage resulted in high bills in January. This was again something that we walked through with the Utilities Board to explain exactly what happened.

This explanation went out to those customers thereafter and should be part of our response on the website there for that particular customer complaint.

Lane Tredger: Thank you for that summary. I guess what stands out to me about that is that there were billing problems going back to at least November 2025, and according to the witness, that didn't affect the bonuses for the executives, despite the fact that it sounds like —

Point of order

Chair: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Chair, I believe the motion originally adopted was to talk about electrical services and infrastructure. I don't understand why performance bonuses would be part of that discussion.

Chair: Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Lane Tredger: I'm asking about the management structures that oversee the electrical infrastructure, which have a big impact on how it rolls out.

Chair's ruling — Relevance of debate

Chair: I believe that we've had this discussion quite recently and that discussions in Committee of the Whole are to be strictly relevant. I would ask members to do that.

Lane Tredger: Thank you.

So, when the decisions were made about the compensation for executives who oversaw the electrical system of the Yukon in 2025 — the fact that dozens of customers received incorrect bills in November 2025 was not taken into account and did not reduce those bonuses. Is that correct?

Jay Massie: Again, on that particular issue, there was a software update overnight for AMI meters. It was a very specific one-time incident that has not happened since and did not happen before. Again, the information you're looking at there does explain quite a bit of our response and the result to the Utilities Board.

I would say, as a company and as a set of workers, I guess — one incident for 812 customers in Whistle Bend, I don't think is a fair representation of the performance for the rest of the year of the utility business.

Lane Tredger: The other thing that stands out to me from reading about the Whistle Bend billing cycle 10 incident is that — what I had understood from the previous conversation with the witness is that the only problems were around the estimation of

bills and the new system, and that got exacerbated or made apparent during the cold weather. This sounds like a second issue. So, there are at least two separate billing issues that have gone on in the last year that have affected dozens of customers or more each, and that just really makes me wonder: Are there more? Were there more that go further back, perhaps to the beginning of this new software being introduced in December 2023? And if those happened before July 2024, they won't be caught in the audit.

I'll ask the witness. He had said before that he has confidence in the billing system other than when it comes to winter estimates. There has been this other issue that we've just discussed that was a different kind of mistake than what happened with the billing issues. How confident is he that there are not any other significant billing issues that have happened in the last few years?

Jay Massie: Yeah, again, that cycle 10 incident was a one-off. It was a software update, very specific to those customers. One of the outcomes of that was some pretty clear communication with all those customers well after the fact, just to explain exactly what happened there.

Yes, I do have confidence in the billing system. The amount of work that goes in behind the scenes of it — well, there's a lot. Again, looking at these estimates that went in, they did not affect all customers. Not all customers were affected by these billing issues, and I think one of the problems I've seen is that this is being talked about as a system-wide issue or billing system issue when it is not. We have never said that. The estimations were higher than we wanted. That's back in January, when there was 25 percent of customers estimated. That was really the crux of the issue. It has decreased thereafter, but that really was the start of the concerns.

I can tell you that, thereafter and for the good part of the first half of this year, we had many customers reaching out and contacting us about their bills, concerned about if their billing was accurate or not. For the vast majority, we walked through and they were accurate. It boiled down to some rightful concerns about affordability. I think that's one of the big problems: the issues with the estimations that happened last winter get conflated with affordability and the price increases that have happened at the same time. Again, many of the customers — we've walked through their bill with them and it's accurate. Again, back to that source of truth — the meter on their house — you can look at that and see that read, and that is what you're going to be billed on because that's the actual usage that you're using.

Lane Tredger: I appreciate the witness's point that there has been a lot of very hard work to resolve this, and I think, from the perspective of running the business, it makes sense that that would be his focus. I want to place the focus on the Yukoners who are trying to afford their electricity bills, who have gotten incorrect bills — and I have examples here — in the thousands of dollars. That turns their household budgets and their lives upside down. It doesn't have to be an issue that affects every single customer to make it an issue that has enormous impacts on Yukoners and means people living with stress and uncertainty, going into debt and paying interest on that debt to try to make it right. It's a huge problem. It's a problem that has had really, really negative consequences for a lot of Yukoners. That doesn't mean that people haven't been working hard to fix it. That doesn't mean there weren't logical reasons that it happened. That doesn't mean there's not good work happening to keep it from happening again. But I just really think we need to keep those Yukoners who are trying to keep a roof over their heads at the centre of the conversation.

The witness said that the vast majority of the bills, when they went through them with people, were correct. In the November update from ATCO, it talked about an internal review having been done, and I'm not sure if that's the review that he's kind of referencing when he says most of the bills were correct. But I wonder if the witness could provide any of the information from that review. Does he have a sense of what percentage of customers were affected either during the peak period of disruption — maybe from December through to the summer — or since then?

Jay Massie: Again, I think we're conflating the issue of affordability with the billing system. It is not the billing system that has anything to do with affordability. The two are separate things, and again, I can tell you our team is fully cognizant of the affordability challenges for Yukoners. I can tell you that a lot of people know who I work for, so I get talked to. I hear first-hand, exactly, the affordability challenges, but again, that is separate and distinct from the issues that we experienced in billing in the first part of 2026 — quarter one.

Back to those estimations and the number of customers affected — again, there were 24 percent of our customers in January who were estimated. That's entirely way too high. It was 24 percent in January and then 22 percent in February and it got down to single digits thereafter.

Our goal is to have actual reads at all times. The weather and the amount of snow last year really made it difficult to get the actual reads. That is really one of the solutions that the advanced metering infrastructure project is going to bring. Those meters communicate on an hourly basis, are not weather dependent, and will provide that steady actual usage and read for customers.

Back to the question on how, in November, there was an internal review — absolutely, we had that earlier in the year to just figure out exactly what was happening and what we could do about it. The result was that we brought on five extra local resources here in Whitehorse, between the field and the front office, as well as 10 to 12 resources we added in which were remote. These are billing system professionals who are able to provide that back-office support as well as billing system corrections. That was the review that was undertaken and the response that we had to get us back on track.

Lane Tredger: I do know we're getting toward the end of the day, so I do, before I wrap up, want to thank all the witnesses for making the time to be here, in case I don't get a chance at the end.

I want to follow up on what the witness had just said about the extra resources that were brought on to help correct the billing issues. Will the costs for those extra resources be brought to the next GRA that ATCO does? Approximately how much was spent over the last year on those extra resources?

Jay Massie: I don't know the cost of them off the top of my head. There was a significant cost. They were not only brought on to do corrective work but to clear that backlog so we could get back on track with actual reads and billing going forward. That's what they're brought on for.

I can say the dollars were spent in 2026. 2026 is not a rate application year. They will not be part of a rate application in the future. Those costs are ours to bear and part of what we need to do to get that confidence back from customers in the billing system and to get it back into a stable state.

Lane Tredger: The witness referenced what I believe was the number of bills issued using actual meter reads. I missed the exact number. Maybe he will repeat for me what those rates were during the peak time of challenges.

I'm looking on the ATCO Electric Yukon website and they do provide those, but only as far back as June 8. I'm wondering if there's a reason that it only goes back six months, and if they would provide that information on the website going back perhaps a year or two.

Jay Massie: It only goes back to June because that's really when we started tracking it.

The information isn't available. One of those learnings that we had after our internal review is we really have to figure out where we were at and what we can report out on of what we were doing. But, yeah, it wasn't until June that we really started that communication with customers, explaining a bit more, and that was one of the metrics that was suggested to be out there.

Lane Tredger: Does ATCO Electric Yukon have targets for those metrics that they're hoping to reach?

Jay Massie: As you see on there, there's a 95- or 96-percent actual read success rate, and our goal is 100 percent. Again, we want to get actual reads to customers, fully understanding that's what they deserve.

Chair: Order. The time being 5:30 p.m., the time designated for the appearance of witnesses has now expired. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair offers our thanks to all the witnesses who appeared today.

The witnesses are now excused.

The Chair shall now rise and report.

Witnesses excused

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Patti McLeod: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5, Committee of the Whole considered the operations and policies of the Department of Economy, Tourism and Culture, and also pursuant to Motion No. 161, adopted by the House as amended, Motion No. 203, and Motion No. 212, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding electrical infrastructure and services.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

The time being after 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled today:

SP-36-1-73

2025 Yukon Health Status Report Update — Focus on Communicable and Infectious Diseases (Cathers)

SP-36-1-74

Yukon State of the Environment Report 2026 — A report on environmental indicators (Istchenko)

SP-36-1-75
Department of Education 2025–26 Annual Report (Kent)

SP-36-1-76
Yukon Child Care Board 2025–26 Annual Report (Kent)

The following filed documents were tabled today:

FD-36-1-44
Yukon Water Board 2025–2026 Annual Report (Dixon)

FD-36-1-45
Red Tape Reduction Framework (Gehmair)

FD-36-1-46
Red Tape Reduction — What We Heard — November 2026 (Gehmair)