

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, November 23, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Geoscience Week

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I rise today to ask my colleagues in the House to join me in paying tribute to the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Yukon Geoscience Forum. Once again, the forum will be showcasing the latest in mineral exploration and geoscience research. It will also include numerous industry representatives presenting exciting information about mineral industry development over the last year.

Over its many years, the forum has become well respected among industry, government and academia. The event provides the latest information on exploration, development and technology associated with the mineral and oil and gas sector of the territory. Yukon government's own geologist will be on hand updating participants on results from this year's field work, as well as offering updates on some of the many exploration programs in Yukon, new and ongoing.

I want to take this time to congratulate our team of geologists at the Yukon Geological Survey for their excellent work and to recognize their involvement in the forum. The Yukon Geological Survey plays an important role in supporting the management and continued development of Yukon's mining industry. Exploration decision-making and resource planning depend on up-to-date, quality information.

Over the past four years, the Yukon Geological Survey has been undertaking a tremendous range of new geophysical and geochemical studies. This research further enhances one of the best geosciences information bases in Canada. All the data from this research is analyzed and made available to the public through the comprehensive on-line map and database management by the Geological Survey.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Yukon Chamber of Mines for all the hard work they have done organizing the forum again this year. The Yukon Chamber of Mines represents industry across the full spectrum of exploration and mining activity in Yukon. In addition to promoting responsible and prosperous exploration and mining in Yukon, the Chamber of Mines works to increase public awareness of the benefits of responsible, sustainable development of Yukon's mineral resources.

Each year, the geological science forum attracts a wide range of attendees. Attendees include geologists, scientists, academics, investors, prospectors, placer miners, as well as

representatives from service and supply companies and mining and oil and gas companies. This wide range of attendees highlights the significance and impact of the growing Yukon mineral industry. Research gives us a better understanding of how best to manage Yukon's non-renewable resources. It is through opportunities such as the Geoscience Forum that we learn how this research is being applied by industry.

In closing, I would like to say that the Yukon government is pleased to support the Geoscience Forum.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McRobb:** I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to also pay tribute to Geoscience Week. Geoscience Week celebrates many aspects of the Yukon's mineral resources. This includes the dedicated work by geologists, prospectors, miners, and the good work of several public servants and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.

The highlight of the week is the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Geoscience Forum, which opened this morning in Whitehorse. The forum is an opportunity for miners, people in the support industries and others to gather, exchange information and do business together.

More than 400 delegates are expected to attend this year's forum, which always features updates on exploration development and mining activities, as well as a busy tradeshow. Yukon-based service and supply, geologists, scientists, prospectors, oil and gas representatives as well as quartz and placer mining companies will be in attendance.

Since the Klondike Gold Rush more than a century ago, the Yukon's mineral industry has been a foundation of the territory's private sector economy. The territory hosts significant deposits of gold, copper, lead, zinc, silver, tungsten and several other minerals.

In 2008, there were approximately 105 active placer mining operations directly employing some 350 people. The Yukon's untapped mineral potential is exemplified by several significant new discoveries, including the White Gold area. We all know there are several promising deposits waiting to be developed and more to be discovered.

In closing, we extend a warm Yukon welcome to all visitors to the forum and trade show. We're sure this will be another successful event and we wish everybody well.

**Speaker:** Further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I'd like to introduce Mike and Kyle Nixon, who are in the House with us today.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there further introductions of visitors?

Returns or documents for tabling.

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Mr. Mitchell:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide funding support for the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's Whitehorse Connects program, which provides a range of free services in one location several times a year for those who are homeless, living in poverty or among the working poor.

**Mr. McRobb:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to fully disclose the details of its secret negotiations with ATCO with respect to our territory's water resources.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all documents and papers related to the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and Department of Environment on the transfer of responsibilities for water testing, inspection and analysis at the Minto mine.

I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all water-testing, inspection and analysis results from the Minto mine.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection to complete its work and to bring forward its recommendations to be debated in the 2010 spring sitting, which will allow the government to have legislation prepared for the 2010 fall sitting.

**Mr. Hardy:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to honour the political commitment made 20 years ago this Tuesday when the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion by New Democratic Party MP Ed Broadbent calling on the government of the day to develop a national strategy to reduce the percentage of children living in poverty to a five-percent level within 10 years.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government where:

- (1) a maintenance and/or child support order has been granted by the court;
- (2) the recipient spouse has registered with the maintenance enforcement program; and
- (3) payments are one month or more in default;

THAT the Yukon government:

- (1) guarantee payment to the recipient spouse in the amount of the order;

- (2) establish the payment regardless of the employment and family circumstances of the recipient;

- (3) eliminate the practice of the recipient applying for social assistance;

- (4) proceed to recoup the amount of payment and interest from the defaulting parent and not from the recipient.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?

Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Speaker, in response to my question last week about the Premier's political interference in the Peel planning process, the Minister of Environment had this to say, and I quote: "The Premier of the Yukon — and certainly I as Minister of Environment — certainly have not politically interfered in the land use planning process."

Mr. Speaker, we have a Premier who made an irate phone call to the minister's senior official. That qualifies as political interference. After that irate phone call, her department's 20-page submission to the Peel planning commission was reduced to four pages. That qualifies as political interference.

This minister was not even in the room during the irate phone call. To claim that there was no political interference when she doesn't know first-hand really destroys the confidence in this government. She wasn't there. How can she claim — with any credibility —

**Speaker:** Order please. Ask the question.

**Mr. Fairclough:** — that there was no political interference in her department?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, again, I'll reiterate for the members opposite that the Yukon government very much supports the independent process associated with land use planning when it comes to the Peel watershed, when it comes to north Yukon, when it comes to Dawson planning and when it comes to many others that are in need of being completed.

We very much support the work that is currently underway by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, which has been tasked with the sole authority to recommend a plan to come forward to the Yukon government, as well as a number of First Nation governments. That plan is underway and will be coming forward to the respective governments by the end of the year.

Again, we very much support the work of the respective departments, including Environment, Tourism and Culture and many others, which have contributed over the last number of years to the planning process associated with the Peel watershed. In terms of Environment, they have contributed wholeheartedly in terms of providing data, unbiased information, completing regional ecological land classification, mapping and engaging with multi-stakeholders to develop criteria for conservation planning.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister is skirting around the question. She wasn't there. The minister was not in the room when that irate phone call took place. She doesn't know first-hand what happened.

This minister's former Cabinet colleague has confirmed that the Premier made the irate phone call. The former Cabinet colleague was there in the room. He knows what happened first-hand and has confirmed what we all know to be true. We know for sure that an irate phone call did take place, and the Department of Environment's submission to the Peel planning commission was gutted. That is political interference.

This is about integrity and trust. So my question is this: why should we believe this minister, who was not in the room at the time, over people who have first-hand knowledge of what actually happened?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** What, in fact, the member opposite should adhere to is chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which refers to the role of the planning commission — the planning council — which, again, has the sole authority to provide land use planning, including the policies, goals, and priorities of the Yukon, identification of planning regions, priorities for the preparation of regional land use plans, the boundary of each planning region and so forth.

Now, I know the member opposite does have a copy of chapter 11 as, in fact, I believe the member opposite tabled. Unfortunately, the member opposite should have read it.

Mr. Speaker, again, I will reiterate that the Government of Yukon very much supports the integrity associated with the land use planning associated with the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. Again, it has been tasked to recommend the regional land use plan. That work is currently underway. We look forward to receiving it at the end of the year; likewise First Nation governments will also be in receipt of the plan. We look forward to moving ahead just as we have done with the north Yukon land use plan, and likewise as we have done with a number of habitat protection areas/special management areas.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment claims that there was no political interference in the operation of her department. The fact is she wasn't there when the political interference happened. Now she is hiding behind chapter 11 again. Her senior official has clearly indicated in an e-mail that an irate phone call did take place. This minister was not on the other end of the phone call; it was her senior official. The fact is that the Department of Environment submission to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission was gutted, and the minister allowed it to happen. The fact is that her former Cabinet colleague has confirmed that all of this took place. He was in the room. The fact is that this minister is reciting second-hand information, because she doesn't know exactly what happened. The fact is that Yukoners have lost confidence in this government. When is the minister going to give us the straight goods and why won't she do that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that chapter 11, called "land use planning", as contained in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* does dictate obligations adhered to by the respective governments, including the Government of Yukon and self-governing First Nations.

We are committed to the land use planning process, which is evidenced by the north Yukon land use plan that was approved earlier this year, between the Government of Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation chief and council.

We have also signed off the habitat protection area for Old Crow Flats — over a million hectares of land protected and preserved for the enjoyment and respect of all Yukoners, specifically the people of the Vuntut Gwitchin. Likewise, we were also very pleased to sign off on the Tombstone Territorial Park management agreement between Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Yukon government. We are also pleased to engage in a number of planning processes when it comes to habitat protection areas, forest management areas, special management areas — and the list goes on.

We are committed to the independent work of the planning commission. We look forward to receiving that plan and taking it from there.

#### **Question re: Ministerial responsibility**

**Mr. Mitchell:** It's customary in this House to direct questions about departments to the ministers named responsible for them, but when orders come only from the Premier himself, it might be time to abandon that custom. Sometimes the Premier only needs to skate around his ministers to direct their departments. We've seen that it's not the Minister of Environment who runs her department. Her officials know they get their orders from the incensed Premier at the other end of the phone. Sometimes the Premier's appropriation is legitimized by dicta, like last summer when the Premier's secret plans to privatize Yukon Energy Corporation were revealed. The Premier retired the minister responsible from the file and assumed it himself. The Premier is doing all the talking and leaving his ministers with nothing of substance left to say.

Just what responsibilities does the Premier leave these other members of his government?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** The roles and responsibilities for the Executive Council, Cabinet, each minister and the Premier's office are clearly defined. Those responsibilities for ministers in any particular department rest within the mandate of the department. The members all know what those are. They can read those preambles in budget documents and in other matters. The government side, after seven years, certainly has got a clear understanding of those roles and responsibilities.

For the Yukon Territory to have successfully progressed in the manner it has over the last seven years — this cannot be done by one individual; it's humanly impossible. It's done because the Yukon Party government has a solid team with its ministers well-versed in carrying out their roles and responsibilities on behalf of the Yukon public.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the roles and responsibilities may be clearly defined, but when power is centralized in the corner office, it leaves the other government members with very little to do — but that doesn't mean it doesn't have an effect on their departments. Officials know they can't count on their ministers to stand up for them, and government departments get fractured into rival camps. In an internal e-mail about the Premier's irate call to gut Environment's submission to the Peel land use planning commission, an official wrote: "This approach is hardly in the interest of building a common corporate response that will reflect Yukon's interests and will only further entrench us into an EMR versus Environment mentality."

Mr. Speaker, this government has adopted a strange hierarchy with the Premier at the top, officials right under him and his ministers off waiting in the wings to be told when they can speak.

When will the Premier allow his ministers to actually exercise their ministerial responsibilities?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Given the success that this government has had, and the successful experiences of Yukoners to date over seven years, it's pretty obvious that the ministers have taken on significant responsibility, and have done a very exemplary job in delivering a plan and a vision for the Yukon and its future.

I know it doesn't fit with the Leader of the Official Opposition's desire, but that's unfortunately the way it is. We'll continue to do the work we were elected to do by carrying out those responsibilities, as we were required to, to the Yukon public and deliver on the plan and vision that we have had evolving and that we've been implementing since 2002 in this territory.

The evidence speaks for itself: growing population; one of the lowest unemployment rates; doubling our fiscal capacity; hundreds of more millions being invested from the private sector, such as the mining industry; building infrastructure; lowering our carbon footprint; protecting and conserving Yukon's environment, its wilderness, its wildlife; working in partnership with other governments, First Nations and industry; building our arts and cultural community; building a film and sound industry and entering into the knowledge-based economy.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It would be a disservice to say that this government is a one-man band. In fact, it has been a pageant production and in it the Premier is star, director and most of all, publicist. It is the Premier's voice Yukoners hear on the news constantly excusing this government's endless litigation, its abrasive relationships with First Nations, its condescension toward its partners in education.

In this House, they hear the Premier justifying political interference in the Peel and wordsmithing his way around being caught selling out Yukon Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been staging a marathon performance but the lines are familiar by now and Yukoners are growing impatient with this production. It is time to hear from the ministers responsible. When will the Premier let his ministers actually direct their departments?

### Unparliamentary language

**Speaker:** Before the Hon. Premier answers, the Chair has a bit of a problem with the description of "wordsmithing." The implication from the Chair's perspective is that one member is not being honest and truthful in this House. I'm not going to ask the honourable member to retract it but please just keep it in mind.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, if we were to conserve and protect Yukon's environment — its land, its water and its wildlife — in the manner the Leader of the Official Opposition is presenting to this House, we wouldn't have been successful on any level. The government has made great progress in that

protection and conservation of Yukon's most precious resource — our environment and our wildlife.

I'm not sure what the Leader of the Official Opposition intends to accomplish, other than the fact that the Official Opposition continues to remain as part of the problem and refuses to do the hard work so they become part of the solution.

### Question re: Women in poverty

**Mr. Hardy:** In a couple of days, we'll be reading tributes in this House on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Year after year, we make profound statements about the devastating effect that violence against women has on families and society, and there is a direct relationship between health — both physical, psychological — and poverty, and there is a direct correlation between violence and poverty.

Developing policies to close the economic gap between First Nation and other cultures in the territory should take precedence. Closing the economic gap between women and men should also be a top priority of this government. What is the government doing to eliminate poverty for women in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I would like to assure the member opposite that this government takes the issues of women's equality very seriously, and we work interdepartmentally on these issues.

We have held many forums for women in Yukon. We have annual meetings for mentorship. We sponsor the Yukon aboriginal women's groups. We work actively with First Nations who design their own specifically programming. We are very concerned and we are working toward the end of inequality toward women in Yukon.

**Mr. Hardy:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ and with all due respect, I don't think the numbers have dropped with regard to poverty that many women live in as well as the violence that is often attached to it.

The programs now in place are not the answer, obviously. If they were, we wouldn't be seeing the horrifying statistics we do. They are not eliminating violence against women or changing the economic disparity behind the violence. Amnesty International has launched an indigenous women's campaign to raise awareness of the extremely high levels of violence faced by indigenous women in Canada. It is calling the campaign a wake-up call for Canada and recommends that Canada develop a specific and integrated plan for addressing the health, social and economic conditions affecting aboriginal women. I'd like to say for all cultures as well.

Conditions affecting all women who live in violence are poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, low school-completion rates, low employment rates and low income. Those are all factors.

How is this government working with other governments to develop a plan to address poverty and violence faced by women?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** As the Minister of Justice mentioned, we're taking a very interdisciplinary approach on this and I welcome the opportunity to tell the member opposite

some of the steps that the Department of Education is doing to address this issue.

The member has heard in this Assembly some of the initiatives going on, such as the Be the Change program in all our schools. The member opposite has heard about initiatives such as the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology. The member has heard different statistics about the tremendous increase in the number of apprentices in the territory, especially the number of female apprentices in non-traditional occupations.

The Department of Education is putting in place opportunities for people to further their education, to enter into economic opportunities, to take advantage of those. In the Department of Education we're working to demonstrate that these types of behaviours cannot be tolerated and should not be tolerated. We're working on educating to change the views and opinions of people and also, at the same time, creating economic opportunities for women and women of First Nation ancestry in our territory.

**Mr. Hardy:** Many people say the poor will always be with us. They say there is not much more we can do, considering the current state of the economy. These attitudes have brought us to such a sorry state of affairs, where young aboriginal women are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as a result of violence. This is not working. What do we have to do?

We can do much more in the Yukon for women in poverty. We can ensure that they have equal access to justice. We can increase public awareness by collecting and publishing reliable and current statistics on rates of violence. We can eliminate discrimination in providing funding for services to women.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, in our prosperous country we can do more to address one of the root causes of violence, which is poverty. In its next budget, what new programs and policies will this government introduce to address the serious poverty and violence issues plaguing women?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We plan to address the situation the member talks about here with regard to implementing our social-inclusion strategy. We intend to do that early in the new year. We're looking at putting on a conference early in the new year to bring stakeholders together to deal with all the issues of poverty, social inclusion, making sure everybody is included and not excluded in the process, which deals with affordable housing, training and education.

We'll be working with the Women's Directorate to address the issues of women in poverty and the abuse situations. We plan to bring in appropriate consultants to assist us in trying to derive this information from those involved so we can bring our numbers a little bit more in line with the national standard and hopefully address the issues and concerns of the member opposite.

#### **Question re: Children in poverty**

**Mr. Hardy:** I continue to be astounded by the appalling state of child poverty in a country as rich as ours. It was 20 years ago tomorrow — tomorrow, 20 years ago — that a motion brought forward by NDP MP Ed Broadbent was unanimously passed in the House of Commons to set a national target to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. But Canadian

children today are worse off than ever — 20 years and we're doing worse.

The Conference Board of Canada ranks Canada 13<sup>th</sup> in comparison with 16 other industrialized countries in the area of child poverty. About one in seven Canadian children — just over 14 percent — live in poverty. One place we could do something to address this problem is in the area of child maintenance, and I brought a motion forward earlier.

Will the Minister of Justice tell us what she is doing to improve the present child-maintenance provisions in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** As to the question from the member opposite, I do not have those details with me at the moment. I can get these answers to him afterward if he would like to meet with me and go over it.

**Mr. Hardy:** We are aware this government has established a Family Law Information Centre, which assists with maintenance and other family law problems. The centre calculates child and spousal support and offers help with completing court forms. The services it provides are valuable, Mr. Speaker; however, they are quite limited. The centre cannot offer legal advice. To get that, people need to hire a lawyer. The centre cannot represent people in court, file court documents or serve forms on anyone. For that, people need to hire a lawyer or do it themselves. They have to get a court order and register to receive help when child support payments fall in default.

Many single parents, especially women, don't have the financial means to hire lawyers; that is reality in our society. When will the Minister of Justice look at expanding the role of the Family Law Information Centre so that it can offer better support to single parents?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** We have Community Wellness Court, we have family violence diversion court for children, we have the OWLS program for children who witness family violence, and we have legal aid for those who need legal assistance. We have many services for women and children, especially for violence. We take violence against women and children in Yukon very seriously.

**Mr. Hardy:** As I hope the minister does, and I think everybody in the territory also takes it very seriously. Canada's maintenance laws are way behind the times. Many European countries obviously take it far more seriously because they are far more advanced in the maintenance programs they offer single parents. For example, a parent can apply to have at least part of a maintenance payment advanced to him or her by the government if it is in arrears. The government then goes after the non-paying parent for the amount.

In the Yukon, the caretaking parent is told to apply for social assistance, and then he or she must go after the non-paying parent in court themselves. It's no wonder this is seldom done. It's archaic and it doesn't work.

This is one reason why more children live in poverty today than in 1989, when Ed Broadbent championed setting national targets to reduce child poverty. In the interest of maintaining children's living standards and keeping them from falling into poverty, when will this government improve its child-maintenance policies?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** If we have family/child maintenance, it is ordered by the courts. We make sure that those orders are followed. Within our Justice department we do have a department that takes care of this, and it is handled for the individuals, for the children, and it is strictly enforced.

**Question re: Water resource assets**

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up on the ATCO water issue with the Premier since he won't allow the Environment minister to speak for herself. On Thursday, he made all sorts of allegations that nobody is buying. For instance, the Premier suggested we had not read the document and that it corroborates the government's position. The document, Mr. Speaker, is a joint position paper leaked to the public this past June by the former YEC chair. Not only have we read the document, several Yukoners have too, and they're very interested in learning more about what this government was hoping to gain by secretly negotiating away our territory's water resources without their knowledge or consent.

So can the Premier kindly tell us what exactly did he discuss with ATCO about our water as documented in the evidence?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** First off, any discussions this government undertakes in areas that might provide an option of investment for Yukon in building infrastructure, building our economy — we will engage in discussions. In fact, this government has proven time and time again, over the last seven years, that building partnerships is very beneficial for the territory. All we have to do is look around us.

The Member for Kluane is implying that there were secret negotiations. The member knows full well that that's incorrect. The member insinuated that we were secretly negotiating the sale of Yukon's water assets. The member knows that that's incorrect. What the member just doesn't want to accept is that partnerships are a fact of life in the Yukon and that, without them, we would not even be able to meet the needs of today. That's why we negotiated with Canada a very solid partnership of investment in Yukon's hydro infrastructure.

**Mr. McRobb:** Department officials were eager to clarify at the briefing that they were completely unaware of the Premier's parallel process with respect to negotiating with ATCO. They knew about ATCO Water but were unaware of how far the Premier was prepared to go in his secret negotiations. So are Yukoners, and that's why we're asking this question. This is not a figment of our imagination. This is not confusion or ridiculous or surreal, as the Premier suggested on Thursday. This is documented in the evidence on page 3. I'll send it over now so we can both be on the same page.

The Premier is still in denial. It's another one of those many examples of how bad news is spun into good news.

Mr. Speaker, the secret negotiating away of our water resources is not good news. This government needs to fess up. What was it hoping to gain from this deal?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** In the first place, there was no negotiation to sell Yukon's water assets, Yukon's hydro assets, Yukon's electrical assets, Yukon's transmission assets, Yukon's distribution assets — quite the contrary. The Yukon government has been investing in building up those assets for

the Yukon Energy Corporation. Furthermore, any discussions that took place that were exploratory with ATCO were centred around the fact that we were not selling assets and that this is all about a public utility.

Where the member is getting this type of interpretation from any document tabled is really surprising, Mr. Speaker. There were no such discussions whatsoever. The officials have given the Official Opposition a very clear briefing on what took place. As far as parallel negotiations — that is a figment of the Member for Kluane's imagination.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is in denial, yet he says they were exploratory — that is negotiations. He is denying the facts as presented by the evidence. His Yukon Party colleagues are all behind him on this. They are all in it together, Mr. Speaker. Yukoners will be the final judge in this matter, and this government will face their wrath at the polls in the next election. The Premier and his colleagues should be up front with Yukoners on this very important matter. They kept it secret from the public. They have yet to acknowledge the evidence. Government officials were only aware of the Premier's April phone call to ATCO — that is when the Premier invited ATCO to invest in our water. It is in the evidence. How many other discussions did the Premier have with ATCO regarding the Yukon's water resources?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** None, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the discussions that were taking place with ATCO were clearly being done with officials and representatives of ATCO. To suggest that we would sell water assets or any other assets, given the evidence — I can't help the member opposite, the Member for Kluane. The Official Opposition has made their interpretation; we know they're confused. This is something that is up to them to resolve with themselves and with Yukoners. In the meantime, we'll continue to invest in Yukon's assets, especially when it comes to the demonstrated need we have in this territory for energy assets.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

#### Motion No. 890

**Clerk:** Motion No. 890, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Taylor.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Minister of Environment THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

(1) climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today,

(2) in Yukon and across the circumpolar north the effects of climate change are occurring at a rapid rate and are impacting forests, wildlife, transportation corridors, infrastructure, water, food security and traditional ways of life, and

(3) addressing climate change requires collaboration and action at all levels of government;

THAT this House recognizes the role of subnational governments' experience and expertise in informing and support-

ing national governments in achieving a global climate agreement at the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, December 2009; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada and all national governments to make every effort to reach an international agreement on climate change.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I am very pleased to bring this motion forward today, which speaks to one of the greatest challenges facing our world today, that being climate change.

In just over two weeks from today, 192 countries will convene in Copenhagen to commence negotiations for the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, otherwise known as COP 15. The goal is to negotiate a new climate treaty that will replace the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, back in December 1997 and entered into force on February 16, 2005.

The Kyoto Protocol, as members may well remember, sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It was signed and ratified by 184 parties to the United Nations climate convention.

As recently articulated by Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, four prevalent issues will require addressing. How much are industrialized countries willing to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases? How much are major developing countries, such as China and India, willing to do to limit the growth of their emissions? How is the help needed by developing countries to engage in reducing their emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change going to be financed? How is that money going to be managed?

Yukoners will very much be part of the Canadian delegation at the United Nations climate talks in Copenhagen next month. In fact, we will be part of the process to help decide how far and how fast to cut greenhouse gas emissions once the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. The Yukon delegation will include MLAs, representing each of the three political parties in the Legislature; it will include youth; it will include officials from the Department of Executive Council Office and the Department of Environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, why should we as Yukoners be concerned with what may or may not happen in Copenhagen? Why should Yukon be present in Copenhagen and what is at stake for all of us, not just here in the Yukon but the rest of the world if we fail to take action?

Mr. Speaker, a lot is at stake. In fact, the stakes could not be higher. Time is of the essence and if we wait any longer the decisions will only be that much more difficult and the consequences even greater.

In the Yukon and across the circumpolar north, the effects of climate change are becoming more and more apparent and are happening at a rapid rate. Canada's north is warming more rapidly than the rest of the country and the rest of the world. As a result, we are experiencing significant changes — changes that have far-reaching implications for our transportation corri-

dors, infrastructure, health of wildlife populations and our own people.

Warming temperatures are resulting in the disappearance of permafrost, which in turn is having an effect on our buildings, our roads, telecommunication towers, heritage resources and other infrastructure. Receding glaciers have resulting impacts of both potential flooding and, by contrast, drying out of areas. The advancing treeline is having a tremendous impact on wildlife and traditional ways of life.

Infestations of forests Canada wide, including the Yukon, are having a negative impact on forest-based economies and devastation of wildlife habitat. These are but a few examples of changes occurring in the north as we know it today. These are also but a few of the many examples of why we need to plan today in order to adapt to the changes of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the world's polar ice cap is shrinking. Northern caribou herds, such as the Bathurst, Beverly, Porcupine caribou herd — they're all declining. Because of these changes, northern people — and in particular, First Nation people, who, for thousands of years, have relied on the caribou harvest for the winter — are now facing hard decisions.

The motion before us today speaks to the role of subnational governments' experience and expertise in informing and supporting national governments in achieving a global climate agreement at the upcoming climate change conference in Copenhagen. This is a really critical point, as it has been estimated that up to 50 to 80 percent of mitigation and adaptation actions needed to reach the ultimate goals of the framework will be implemented at the subnational level.

Subnational governments are responsible for developing and implementing policy, programs, legislation and fiscal mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change, notably in the areas of energy, environment, agriculture, natural resources, transportation and land use planning. Worldwide, subnational governments are successfully implementing measures to address the climate challenge, including green building standards, renewable standards, sustainable forests, agriculture standards and innovative practices to support these initiatives. While it is clearly understood that the Canadian delegation has official standing at COP 15 in which negotiations are within the national government's realm, it is here at home where the changes required to effect change at the national level are required.

Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the climate change action plan that was released earlier this year, the Yukon government is committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, improving our ability to adapt to climate change, and establishing the Yukon as a northern leader in climate change innovation and research. Over the last number of years, the Government of Yukon has undertaken or is the midst of implementing more than 80 projects and policies to address climate change, and the list goes on.

Last week, the governments of Canada and Yukon announced just under \$800,000 to help Yukon adapt to the impacts of climate change. In the area of adaptation, we are working with a multitude of partners. Together with the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon College and the Yukon's Depart-

ment of Environment, work has been carried out to develop regional climate change scenarios from historical and present climate data that are Yukon-specific.

This information will ultimately be used by businesses, developers and government decision-makers when they're considering future climate conditions and required adaptation measures. This initiative also builds on the launch of the first Canadian climate change scenarios network server node north of 60, which was launched at Yukon College earlier this year and which houses output data and climate change models from major efforts underway across the world, as well as here at home.

The forest management branch of Energy, Mines and Resources and the University of Northern British Columbia are also partnering on the assessment of Yukon forests', trees' and ecosystems' vulnerability and adaptability to climate change. It's a two-year project that will provide decision-makers with the critical climate change information needed to make long-term forest management decisions.

Project results will strengthen strategic planning, policy development, management practices within the forest sector and will very much improve the sustainable management of forest ecosystems.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon's departments of Highways and Public Works and Energy, Mines and Resources are also working together to determine how the climate change impact on permafrost will affect government buildings throughout the territory.

Mr. Speaker, in a report that was published in 2007, by the University of Alaska, Anchorage, a reference was made to additional costs to the tune of over \$6 billion to the future maintenance and replacement cost of public infrastructure as a result of climate change and the impact of melting permafrost in the State of Alaska alone. Mr. Speaker, that is why, in fact, action is required to adapt to the changes that are here today, but more importantly, the changes that are very much coming.

This particular project will gather background information on permafrost and other climate data. It will complete an inventory of all government-owned, managed and leased buildings with the final outcome being a risk and vulnerability assessment to inform decision-makers and specialists, including engineers, architects, climatologists, geologists on infrastructure needs relating to climate change and permafrost degradation.

Over the long term, the information will be made available to contractors and engineers. Very much, we as decision-makers will have to consider construction and maintenance of existing future government-owned and operated buildings.

Environment Yukon's water resources branch is also undertaking a project to determine how Yukoners will need to adapt to changes in water supply as the glacier flows melt and impact the supply of groundwater for drinking, as well as industrial use.

This project will support the development of web-based information to inform water users about changing water regimes in the Yukon. It will also assist us as water managers to adapt our water programs to new environmental conditions and climate change. Again, tools developed under this project will

assist First Nation governments, municipal governments, researchers, government agencies and many others in community planning and watershed management.

Earlier today, there was a significant amount of discussion about Yukon's water resources, and we very much recognize the very importance of our water resources in the Yukon and continue to undertake a number of substantive initiatives. We've been able to bring in new drinking-water quality standards and regulations for all communities.

We've been able to adopt a new strategy and standards to manage waste-water effluent that goes into all our rivers and streams. We've been able to negotiate \$25 million in new funding to start the construction of a sewage treatment facility for Dawson City. In addition to this, we're spending an additional \$10 million in water treatment throughout the Yukon, including the communities of Carmacks, Ross River and many others.

Mr. Speaker, we have established five new water quality trends monitoring stations in the Yukon River basin alone. We are undertaking a major project within our water resources branch to assess the capacity of existing water programs within the territory to ensure we meet the needs of water users as they respond to the effects of climate change alone.

We are working with First Nations as we speak, in providing support to study climate change impacts on major watersheds such as the Yukon River through the use of traditional knowledge and as scientific monitoring.

We are continuing to invest in Yukon's fish and wildlife inventory work, which is also critically important to the way in which we can and will adapt to climate change challenges. We've invested in a new animal health program to very much identify and to be able to better respond in a holistic, comprehensive, integrated manner to some of the problems and challenges that continue to face our wildlife.

Investments through the northern strategy are enabling Yukon communities, such as the City of Dawson and the City of Whitehorse, to conduct work on community sustainability adaptation plans. Last month, the Yukon government, Yukon College, Council of Yukon First Nations, also opened the doors to the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence, which will facilitate, coordinate and distribute research in the Yukon, ensuring information gets to the people who need and will use it. It will focus on climate change adaptation with the intent of further attracting future leaders in applied science to join the efforts here at home to find solutions and benefit from well-designed research programs.

Likewise, the creation of a Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre is helping to develop a research, development and commercialization centre for the export of new innovative products and services.

In addition to adaptation, the Government of Yukon is also working to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions through energy-efficiency programs for homeowners made available through the Energy Solutions Centre. Yukon Housing Corporation programs and the use of super green technology in the construction of housing projects, such as the new children's receiving home, new staff units in Watson Lake, a new 30-unit family-focused housing initiative here in Whitehorse, Habitat



for Humanity housing initiatives such as the new triplex being constructed on Wheeler Street, are but a few examples of initiatives which are contributing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Conservation and the use of renewable energy through the expansion of hydro are helping to displace thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gases each year.

We're working to implement performance conservation standards that will meet or exceed Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design standards for new government buildings. The most recent example is the new Tombstone Interpretive Centre that was opened earlier this fall.

The Government of Yukon is working to green its fleet with the purchase of over 100 new, smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles. New investments in community recycling initiatives and Raven Recycling regional transfer stations all are helping to divert tonnes of material from entering our landfills. Department of Highways and Public Works has established a new green procurement policy that will ensure the goods and services we purchase meet new and higher environmental standards.

We are working to fully establish the new climate change secretariat that we launched earlier this year. It will provide government-wide leadership and coordination of the government's response to climate change.

In addition to a coordinating role, the secretariat has been tasked with conducting research for setting a territory-wide emissions target, registering our emissions, reviewing a carbon market for Yukon and reporting what progress has been made. The magnitude and urgency of the challenge in stabilizing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change will indeed require an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among all levels and orders of government around the world.

As nations prepare for the United Nations climate conference next month, it is critical that we as a subnational government inform our national government and those of all national governments of our own northern experience and expertise in addressing climate change and to encourage all governments to achieve an international agreement for the sake of our planet Earth.

By working together, the Government of Yukon, First Nation governments and our two sister territories are bringing national and international attention to the north regarding the impacts of climate change and why it is that we need to take action to both mitigate and adapt.

Working together with Arctic nations and subnational governments, we are bringing international attention to the north. The Yukon government also recognizes the importance and necessity of involving youth in Yukon's climate change efforts. Whether it's through our annual Yukon Youth Engagement Forum on Climate Change or sponsorship of youth participation in forums, such as the Power Shift Canada conference held in Ottawa last month, the youth climate change forum that was held in Inuvik this past August, or enabling youth participation in the upcoming United Nations climate conference in Copenhagen this December to play a part in decisions that will affect

the world, these are all ways of helping to develop and empower young leaders in our country.

Youth leaders, such as Malkolm Boothroyd, Cassie Andrew, Cindy Dickson, Lia Johnson, and Matthew Koop-Pearce are all examples of young Yukoners who are leading by example and are working to effect change through their own individual actions, as well as the collective actions of the many organizations they represent.

As was recently put during a radio interview: "Youth get it." And no wonder, as it is they who will be directly impacted by the decisions made by us here today and those of many other world leaders.

Mr. Speaker, my four-and-a-half-year-old son will inherit the decision or indecision of world leaders, and that is the impetus for my actions. On October 24, otherwise known as International Day of Action on Climate Change, I was very honoured to join more than 350 Yukon citizens and millions around the world in a global campaign to call for leadership in our response to the effects of climate change.

As a Yukoner and as a public representative, I was so very proud of the support our community exemplified for this initiative. I would like to extend my thanks to Bringing Youth Toward Equality and the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition for their efforts in organizing this event in such a magnanimous attempt. Compared to other jurisdictions in the country and throughout the world, Yukon showed its colours, very bright and very loud. I couldn't have been more proud of the tremendous degree of support, and I was also honoured to have the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin join with us.

Internationally, Yukon government participation will offer an extraordinary opportunity to share northern experiences with the rest of the world, the impact of climate change on Canada's north and what each of us is doing to address climate change and to bring attention to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Nationally, Government of Yukon's participation and Yukon's participation will help ensure Yukon's interests are heard when the Canadian delegation goes ahead with negotiations and making decisions. Domestically, Yukon's participation will also help highlight Yukon's efforts to respond effectively to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the month ahead — or I should say, the next two and some weeks — are going to be absolutely critical in bringing forward the message of change to all our national governments, including our own Government of Canada. I certainly look forward to receiving the support of all members of the Legislature, as I think it is absolutely critical that Yukon have a united voice in going to Copenhagen and being able to represent the Yukon and part of Canada's north in what climate change does in fact mean to each and every one of us.

When it comes to addressing climate change, it is certainly not just a government initiative, but it comes down to individual actions for each and every one of us. I think that we as Yukoners are very much leading by example. There are a tremendous number of leaders throughout the Yukon, both youth and older generations alike, who continue to speak out in support of taking action against climate change, and I commend them for their efforts.

I recognize that there will be many challenges and there are very many complexities associated with international negotiations to be undertaken soon, but I understand the need for taking action and that the longer we wait, the longer we do have indecision among our national governments, and the consequences will be even greater.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this motion going forward in the Yukon Legislature and being able to take this message to Ottawa and to the Government of Canada in terms of Yukon's approach to climate change, speaking to our experience and our expertise and what this means to all individuals living north of 60.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I would like to respond to this motion that the member has brought forward here. I will try to be brief, because I think we can all agree that we can take a united front and pass this motion along to our partners across Canada and show that Yukon, too, is fully aware of the effects of climate change.

I just want to go back a little bit and talk about a few things. I'm glad that the government has changed its ways from the time when the Member for Klondike said that climate change just wasn't happening. Now we're at least recognizing that something needs to happen here. We need an agreement in Copenhagen, and we're going to be urging — by the way of this motion — basically the rest of the world and the subnational governments — provincial and territorial governments — to bring their expertise and experience forward to help form Canada's position in Copenhagen in December when it comes to climate change.

This is obviously a very tough issue to take on — a touchy challenge. I can go back to when I was the minister responsible for Environment in the Yukon government, and we recognized this many years ago. We did have at least one annual meeting between environment ministers across Canada. This was not so much on the radar of some of the provinces as it was for the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The Yukon did take a leading role in ensuring that Canada and the rest of the provincial ministers at the time were aware that things were happening here in the territory. We brought up things like small changes that are happening in the north; we talked about mosquitoes, bugs, plant life being a week early and affecting the migration route and timing of the Porcupine caribou herd, which could affect the birthing rate of the Porcupine caribou herd.

We talked about our north coast and the fact that, with a one-degree change in our weather, we're losing about a metre of coastline per year. It was back in 1996-97 that we were talking about it, and just think about how much we would have lost: with every increase in the warming temperatures, we would lose that much of our coastline.

Canada always sends a delegation to these types of meetings. Kyoto was an example of how Canada had one of the largest contingents there. I believe there were over 100 people there. I believe this time in Copenhagen we are going to see a lot more people from Canada. I know the minister wants to bring our expertise forward and go to Copenhagen with a

united front but there are a lot of other people who are going to these meetings. I believe the Council of Yukon First Nations has identified some 30 people going. They may not all go but they will be there.

So my direction to the Minister of Environment is that when we are there, we gather our own people and we talk about this and how we could best maybe help guide Canada's position. I know it is very tough because the position is already made and is explained to the Canadian contingent when we are there.

My experience in Kyoto in 1998 — I was there in Japan when the Kyoto Accord was formed. We had the ministers — maybe about six ministers from across Canada from the provincial governments there, and we had our meetings together. We talked and we were able to share some of that with the federal government contingent, which we very rarely saw. Hopefully, things have improved where we can take our positions and maybe help mold Canada's position in Copenhagen.

Mr. Speaker, we all thought that the targets in 1998 in the Kyoto Accord were tough but, you know, Canada didn't move very far on that. It seemed like we went backwards. There were a lot of things I think we could have been leaders in — in innovation and technology, we could have been leaders, and we fell behind. We're recognized now as really not the country that is leading. There was a lot of follow-up from that meeting with the Government of Yukon and the ministers of environment from across Canada continue to talk about the deal that was struck in Kyoto, Japan, and the much-talked-about document, the Kyoto Accord.

At the time, there were meetings in Inuvik, for example, where the ministers talked about where we go from here. Obviously, it's a very tough road. The Yukon Territory is faced with global warming and climate change and it is recognized here today. Perhaps if we moved quicker on the Kyoto Accord, we wouldn't be experiencing what we are today — more rainfall, more snow in the territory, permafrost melting, more severe weather — forest fires seem to be more severe and burning longer and it's tougher for us to deal with.

Again, I was hoping that perhaps the minister could have brought some of the information from many meetings that she did have with other Environment ministers across Canada here today, to share that information of what they have been saying and where Canada is going. I know this is very tough because I had to deal with this. For example, we had a Minister of Energy from Alberta who came to Kyoto, Japan — very tough that Canada cannot meet the targets of the Kyoto Accord — stating the fact that a lot of their electricity is generated by coal and there was a stalling tactic on their behalf. I know we'll be facing that again but it is important to ensure everybody knows the effects of climate change and global warming on the Yukon and in the north because every time that information came out to the rest of the ministers they were all ears, listening to Yukon's position, listening to Northwest Territories' and Nunavut's position.

I think it was information at the time — it's quite a few years ago now, Mr. Speaker — but it was information that the rest of Canada didn't really know or share with one another.

The federal government was very much aware after those meetings. As a matter of fact, they showed enough interest in the Yukon Territory that they did foot the bill for me to go to Kyoto, which was a good thing. It goes to show the federal government was at least working with the territories and the provincial governments when it comes to this.

There are a lot of things we can do once we get over to Copenhagen. It's not very far away. I know Council of Yukon First Nations is sending some members and they'll be leaving and should be there on December 3. A lot of the work starts there, and we arrive a week later. We in the Liberal caucus have taken this seriously. We organized a climate change conference here in the territory a couple of years ago.

We had it recorded. The Member for Copperbelt did an interview and had it played over and over on WHTV, bringing more awareness to climate change and what we need to do globally together, making a big effort. I believe it was very successful. This was in 2007 and the person we brought over was a Guy Dauncey. We held this forum and had a tremendous amount of feedback from the rest of Yukoners on this climate change conference that we had. This is the type of thing that I think the minister could be doing.

Some has been done here in the territory. I think we need to put some higher priority on this coming from the Government of Yukon and really work on this. I believe that right now, through this motion, we are going to be urging Canada and all nation governments to make every effort to come to an agreement. With all the news that has been happening on this issue, it seems like it is even more difficult than the position that people have taken in Kyoto, Japan, in 1998. It is going to be a tough job. Yes, a motion coming from the floor of the Legislature, I am hoping, will make a difference.

My direction to the minister is that, once we get to Copenhagen, let's gather as a Yukon contingent. We have more people than the last time who went to Kyoto. It was just me. We could perhaps meet with the rest of the provincial delegation and the Canadian delegation. They all seem to be separate — the federal government meet on their own and so do the provincial governments. I'm just hoping our voice here in the territory can make some changes and perhaps can make whatever agreement comes from Copenhagen stronger and more reflective of the effects of climate change here in the territory and the northern part of Canada.

That's my direction to the minister. I look forward to having a talk about these things, because there's so much to talk about when it comes to the effects of climate change.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** I first want to express the fact that the minister's motion that has been brought forward for debate today is a very timely one. I think we're all well aware of what has been happening nationally and internationally on the question of COP 15 and the up-and-coming conference in Copenhagen. We're all aware of the history of Kyoto and other factors that have led us here to this point in time.

I'd like to focus on one element of the motion just briefly, so other members can put on the public record their ideas, their views and other matters that they see as important in terms of

preparing Yukon — the minister and our delegation — for, first off, a discussion with the Minister of Environment nationally this week, but in preparation for the coming conference in Copenhagen.

Of course, encouraging our national government to do everything they can to reach an international agreement on climate change goes without saying. The impacts that we are experiencing in the north — first off, I want to be clear that we're not trying to diminish impacts on other areas of the world who are suffering greatly, whether it be changing weather patterns, storm surges and flooding, and fires and so on, but the impacts we experience in the north are stark and very real. It's critical that national governments — not just Canada — but around this globe, come to some sort of arrangement to deal with climate change.

The other factor is the Yukon has been very consistent in its position in the matter of climate change and global warming, and that is the need for adaptation. That has to be a factor nationally and internationally in any agreement and plan. That we recognize adaptation is a must, because whatever we do today in addressing climate change as countries, as governments, as jurisdictions, will have a much longer term requirement once implemented should the measures be the appropriate ones to actually reverse or reduce the impacts in the global phenomenon.

I would like to just briefly focus on subnational governments. Understanding that internationally there are major challenges among the countries that are going to be represented at Copenhagen, subnational governments can do a great deal. Beyond just encouraging our national governments, subnational governments can do things within their jurisdictions to contribute positively. I would like to take us just quickly to our minister's climate change action plan.

After a great deal of engagement with the public, with experts and a number of processes that the government embarked upon some time ago, we developed a climate change strategy for the Yukon as a subnational government and from there developed a climate change action plan.

As a subnational government, we can make the contribution from a Yukon perspective on what it is we're doing as our part in addressing the determinant factors of climate change and global warming — of course greenhouse gas emission reduction being paramount in that area, but also many other factors.

In this process as a subnational government, as a government who has jurisdiction within our borders right here in the Yukon, we intend to do things to make a contribution not only to address issues here locally on behalf of Yukoners, but as a member of the global community.

We have set out four goals in climate change action, Mr. Speaker. The first goal is to enhance knowledge and understanding of climate change. The second goal is to adapt to climate change, and that has been a fundamental issue for us in the north. Not only has Yukon represented that issue, but we — on a pan-northern front — have been very clear with our national government and our other subnational governments —

the provinces — that adaptation has to be part of any process in addressing climate change.

The third goal is to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and the fourth goal is to lead Yukon action in response to climate change. I'll try to be as succinct and brief as possible, but already in the Yukon, goal 1 is developing and evolving: "Establish a Research Centre of Excellence." Step 1 of establishing the Research Centre of Excellence has taken place at Yukon College.

Establishing climate change research and study areas — that will come out of this because the driving force behind the Research Centre of Excellence is research and development, and that includes the innovation cluster, which is in partnership with the college, government, First Nations and industry, which are critical. Partnerships are critical so that we are more successful in dealing with the global phenomenon.

Developing climate scenarios — that's key because we need to develop models and understand where we are today and, more importantly, where we've come from to get to today and how that extrapolates into the future.

The second goal is to adapt to climate change, assessing our vulnerability in infrastructure, for example. This is critical to understand what it would mean in terms of adaptation because of the cost to the Yukon taxpayer and to government, and to our national government, as infrastructure deteriorates due to such issues as the melting of permafrost.

Do an inventory of permafrost information — we're doing that and we're also doing research in the area and, in some cases, in partnership with universities like Laval. Water resource risk and vulnerability — that's a critical assessment to be done. Create a tool to facilitate the collection and distribution of water quantity and quality — that's critical. Hydrology will be a major measurement or barometer of what's happening in regard to climate change.

Yukon forest health — that's also critical, and part of our overall plan as a government and as a subnational government is to assess forest health and risk. I don't think we have to go very far to recognize one of the negative impacts of climate change is the massive infestation of the spruce bark beetle.

This type of insect infestation as it relates to forest health can be, to a large degree, tied to the issue of climate change. The simple way to put it is that, normally, extended periods of very cold winters with temperatures ranging from minus 40 degrees and colder have, for centuries, slowed down and arrested the spread of insect infestation. That has changed somewhat and all that has to take place is a change of a couple of degrees, on average, to help spread the insects and negatively impact the health of our forests.

Reduced fuel loads — this is a part of the plan, and one of the instruments we use is the FireSmart programming and, of course, part of that would be forest management and better understanding tree species. You can see that research and firm research development of tools that we can utilize to better adapt to climate change is essential.

Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions — Mr. Speaker, the government's plan is pretty clear. It is capping greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 and — this is the government's internal

operations, by the way — reduce CHG emission by 20 percent by 2015 and become carbon-neutral by 2020. That's what the government is doing. By the way, today's Yukon is significantly below even the UN levels of emission and we are investing today in hydro infrastructure that further reduces our carbon footprint by literally thousands and thousands of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually because of our reduction of diesel dependency and the use of diesel to produce our daily needs in electricity.

There is a long list of initiatives and actions that the government is embarking on with respect to goal 3. Goal 4: lead Yukon action in response to climate change — I think that's pretty clear. We as a government have a duty and a responsibility to lead the Yukon in its action in response to climate change. That is essentially why we went through the process of developing a climate change strategy and, from there, developing our action plan.

So I want to close by making the point. Yes, this Assembly can send a very clear message to our national government and indeed, all governments, that the Yukon Territory is going to be a constructive and positive force in dealing with climate change, and we encourage all governments to come to an agreement in the best interest of Yukon and of Canada and the world.

We should also never lose sight of the fact that subnational governments, as the minister's motion clearly articulates, must be active and do their part. I can assure the House that those discussions have taken place, even through venues like the Council of the Federation, where the provincial governments and the territorial governments recognize there is a role we must play. That has even gone beyond our borders in discussion with governors in the United States, for example, in discussions with other governments, such as Australia. Subnational governments firmly believe they have a role to play and I'm very pleased to state to this House that the Yukon government, this Yukon government, is working diligently under the leadership of its Minister of Environment to ensure we fulfill that role.

**Mr. Cardiff:** It is with great pleasure today that I rise to discuss this motion. I believe it is an important motion. This is probably one of the most important issues facing not just us in the Yukon, but all of humanity.

I'd like to begin — I'm sure that the minister and the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin may remember this. Last year, my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, was in Poznan, Poland, with the minister and the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the Yukon delegation. There was a period in Poznan where the youth delegation was given a chance to address the Assembly.

I'd just like to read a little bit from the final youth speech. I thought it was quite moving because they were given I think it was three or four minutes — a very short period of time — to try and get a message out, and this is some of what was said: I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world toward one single goal.

Those were the words of a young girl who was addressing the Rio summit. At the time of that speech, the person who was

speaking was 16 years old — or she was just a year old and 16 years later there was still no agreement. There was no real agreement that was moving toward changing this 16-year-old's future and what she said was, "I feel ashamed when countries like mine who have so much, do so little. I feel outraged when they trade basic human rights for their own self-interest. Developed countries must show leadership and if they don't it will be the most unconscionable act in the history of humanity."

There was another youth there from a small island nation and for small island nations they said, "The negative climate impacts are happening today. Our islands are drowning. We are going underwater. I need you to understand that the longer you take to make decisions, the harder our fight for survival becomes. We have a right to existence on this earth. This right is no less than developed nations, but if you do not take action, we face the loss of our islands, our culture and our identity."

"Some of you have indicated that you are ready to get to Copenhagen. Others have yet to demonstrate real leadership."

"This week, my region has grieved us deeply by failing to take bold action. We need your courage. Other countries are backing away from previous commitments. We need your ambition. Change may be coming but we need hope to translate into action. Do not derail our journey to a sustainable future. The train to Copenhagen is already moving, youth are on board — are you? Survival is not negotiable."

The motion talks about climate change as one of the greatest challenges facing the world — and I agree — but it is a survival issue for many people and we need to take that into consideration. We will support the motion but it is a qualified support that we are urging the Government of Canada and all international governments to make every effort to reach an international agreement on climate change.

We know a lot of the negotiating has probably already taken place; it's probably still taking place; but what needs to happen — it's unfortunate that world leaders, like our Prime Minister, won't be there. It's not just to be there to show leadership at a domestic or international level; it's to be there to listen to what the rest of the world is saying about our role, Canada's role, in what the solution is.

We don't believe this motion goes far enough. We think we should be giving more direction to our federal government and to the team, to actually call them to create targets based on good science. If you look in the media, there seems to be, at this point in time, some pessimism out there about the ability to actually reach an agreement.

So we need to go there with a positive attitude and show leadership. Why is this so important? There are all kinds of evidence out there. Leading scientists are worried that if average temperatures on the earth rise just one more degree, global warming could reach the point of no return. As I've heard here earlier — as other people have mentioned — this is going to affect our forests, this is going to affect the wildlife and it's going to affect the world's freshwater resources. Most of the world's freshwater resources are locked up in glaciers and those glaciers are melting at an alarming rate. That fresh water is what sustains our plants, our animals, and indeed us. We

can't afford for it to get to that point of no return. So what we're saying is that we need to take action.

The climate change action plan the Premier was talking about talked a lot about adaptation. I agree. We need to adapt; we need to be ready to adapt to the changes that are coming, but we also need to act, whether it's setting vehicle emissions for cars that are sold in Canada, limiting the use of carbon fuels — whatever we can do needs to be done.

I honestly believe that more could be done in this area and in more areas of energy conservation, for starters. I understand the petroleum industry and the mining industry are concerned about their survival in a new economy, but if we don't act now, we may not survive, and it won't be us but it may be our great-grandchildren or our great-great-grandchildren.

As the minister said earlier, one of the reasons why she's concerned about climate change is because of her son Will — and I've got grandchildren. I'm concerned about them and their ability to survive as well. I'm sure that they're going to grow up and they're going to have children and we need to leave the world in good shape.

The consequences of inaction on reducing emissions — widespread drought, water and food shortages, serious damage to the world's ecosystems, the extinction of more than 40 percent of the world's living species, increased cardio-respiratory infectious diseases, increased deaths from heat waves, droughts and floods and a rise of sea levels of up to 3.7 metres with huge consequences for coastal regions.

I grew up on the west coast of Vancouver Island and experienced a tidal wave in 1964 in Port Alberni and I can tell you right now that a sea level rise of 3.7 metres — there's going to be a lot of that community underwater, and there is nothing to stop it from happening.

As was pointed out by the youth who were in Poland a year ago, there are island states. We owe it to the citizens of the world to do everything that we can do to turn this around or to slow it down. Maybe we can't turn it around, but if we can slow it down, that will give us increased opportunities to adapt. But if we don't slow it down, the adaptation needs to happen fairly fast.

I believe that Canada's strategy so far has actually been to delay and ignore the issue. As a consequence, it has actually had a negative impact on our reputation internationally.

I was reading today some news — Tim Flannery, who wrote *The Weather Makers*, wrote: "Every action has its consequences and, right or wrong, Canada will pay for its Kyoto default. In international politics, as among individuals, reputations are our most important asset, and before Kyoto Canada had one of the finest international reputations in the world. One only need think of the Montreal Protocol, where the world agreed to phase out CFCs and other materials that damage the Earth's ozone layer, or the great work done by Canada in international peacekeeping, to get a sense of how outsiders saw Canada prior to its Kyoto debacle."

What he's talking about is the fact — and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun talked about being in Kyoto when they negotiated that accord. But what has happened is we've failed to meet the targets that were set, so our reputation on this issue, as a

nation, is tarnished. That's why I think it would be — and don't wince; it's not that bad. We need to show leadership. That's why I'm saying the motion doesn't go far enough. The motion should state that the Prime Minister of Canada should go to Copenhagen; he should hear what others around the world are saying about our inability and our lack of action on this issue.

I don't want to take up a lot of time on this, but I'm looking forward to attending with the minister and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun the conference in Copenhagen. I know there will be others from the Yukon attending, as well as people from around the circumpolar north. They will be from every country in the circumpolar north. There will be members from the Arctic Council, from the Arctic Athabaskan Council and others who are going to be there. I'll kind of reinforce what the Member for Mayo-Tatchun was saying: we need to come together with those people who are going to be there from the Yukon and the circumpolar world to discuss how it is affecting us here in the north and what we believe needs to change and hear what their stories are.

I'm going there for — I can think of two reasons off the top of my head. One is that I want to hear what people are saying. I want to educate myself more about this issue. And the other thing I want to do is to be a representative for people in the Yukon. I want to tell people and I want to tell the federal government that we need to take action on this issue. This is going to affect how people live their lives, and it is a human rights issue.

We are one of the richest countries in the world. We have so much, and we owe it — developing nations don't have the resources to develop a green economy. They've got the opportunity to do it, but we need to — as developed nations — take the opportunity and use our resources to assist them so that they don't get trapped in the carbon economy and so we can actually turn this thing around, or at least slow it down if nothing else. As a Canadian, I feel that it would be a travesty of justice for humanity to not try to come to some sort of an agreement that sets solid targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and provides support to developing nations so that they have the opportunity to do the right thing as well. There are developing economies around the world — in India and China — and they're actually, in some instances, making greater strides in developing a green economy than we have here in Canada.

There are incredible opportunities. I view going to this climate change conference in Copenhagen — to COP 15 — as an educational opportunity for me and for our caucus. I want to come back with information. I want to come back with the messages that are going to be delivered there from people around the world. But more than anything, I want to go there as a representative of the Yukon and of Canada and try to contribute to coming up with something that will actually make a difference — not just here in the Yukon and not just here in Canada but in those developing countries — those countries where the survival of populations is threatened. I go back to what the young people in Poland said and it is an issue of survival.

Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** In responding to Motion No. 890, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I would just like to do a review here today of what we as government are doing and what we are doing in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is tasked with the responsible management of Yukon resources and recognize that the impact of climate change must be better understood. To this end, Energy, Mines and Resources continues to work across a number of resource areas to gain a better understanding of the impact of climate change.

The Yukon Geological Survey is working on four projects that will study how permafrost and landslides impact Yukon's terrain. These projects are addressing the effect of climate change on landslide processes to improve Yukon's ability to predict future terrain disturbances. These four research projects include building a GIS-compatible database of permafrost and geotechnical information along the Alaska Highway, monitoring changes at several large active landslides in the Carmacks area, monitoring landslide hazards in targeted areas, and assessing landslide issues along the Alaska Highway corridor.

The forest management branch is studying the impact of climate change on Yukon forests with a comprehensive, three-year research initiative, started this year. The research will investigate the vulnerability to climate change and adaptive capacities of Yukon tree species and forest ecosystems. We're also conducting a Yukon forest health risk assessment. The health and viability of Yukon forests is sensitive to climate change. This assessment would identify past, present and future health concerns identifying appropriate monitoring systems and suggest strategies for adaptation. This project is of mutual interest to the Yukon government and the Canadian Forest Service and its part of implementation of the national forest pest strategy in Yukon.

Demonstrating our commitment to work on climate change, Energy, Mines and Resources has worked in partnership with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to conduct community fuel abatement projects in the southwest Yukon. The fuel abatement initiatives are part of the 2004 forest management plan for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations traditional territory and are part of the Yukon government's climate change action plan.

Climate change will also affect how land is used and managed. Land use planning is taking place across Yukon on the regional and local levels. The department will continue to participate in these processes and bring available knowledge about climate change to the table for consideration.

While climate change presents significant challenges, rising temperatures may provide new agricultural opportunities in Yukon. The agriculture branch continues to support the local production, and sale of agricultural products will reduce food transportation costs and increase local sustainability for Yukoners.

The department is also supporting the development of agricultural infrastructure that creates access to markets, such as finding a permanent location for the farmers market. However, EMR's role in working to address the issue of climate change

is not limited to adaptation. Unfortunately, the thirst for energy is one of the key reasons the world finds itself in this current situation. EMR is working to ensure Yukon effectively and sustainably manages our energy resources.

Guiding these efforts, this spring the Government of Yukon released the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. The *Energy Strategy for Yukon* provides a vision for conserving, using and developing energy sources to meet Yukon's energy needs. The energy strategy identifies opportunities and priorities for actions that improve Yukon's access to reliable and affordable energy. Because burning wood efficiently to heat buildings produces less greenhouse gas emissions than burning oil, the Energy Solutions Centre is identifying wood energy opportunities for residential and institutional heating.

For this, there are a number of projects already underway: work to develop a bio-energy strategy, which will provide a clear regulatory and economic framework for supporting the development of a bio-energy sector in the territory; work with Yukon government's property management division to assess the feasibility of converting several existing institutional hydro-carbon-based heating systems in Yukon government buildings to clean burning, efficient pellet heating systems; and an assessment of the potential for using residue wood chips from a Dawson City lumber operation to displace the use of fuel oil for heating municipal water during the winter to keep it from freezing.

Energy, Mines and Resources also provides important support for Yukoners and Yukon businesses seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For a number of years, the Energy Solutions Centre has conducted an annual vehicle emission clinic. The clinic raises general awareness about the benefits of reducing emissions and specific information on how to optimize vehicle performance.

The Energy Solutions Centre will also be undertaking a study of the transportation sector in the territory, focusing on energy use. This study will establish a baseline for energy consumption in the transportation sector and will identify current trends and potential opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation sector contributes approximately 60 percent of Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing emissions from this sector will significantly affect Yukon's overall greenhouse gas emissions.

In October of this year, ESC sponsored a U.S.-based vehicle conversion expert to deliver a training session in Dawson City on how to convert a gas-powered vehicle to electric power, to build capacity in this sector and to raise awareness of the benefits and challenges associated with this energy technology.

As the Yukon government moves forward on implementation of the energy strategy, one area of this work is steps to establish new policy for independent power production and a new policy for net metering. The Government of Yukon looks forward to the public consultation on net metering and independent power production this fall. An IPP policy would not in any way privatize Yukon's public assets; rather, the policy would offer both the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon

Electrical Company Limited increased options as to how to meet the future energy demands of the territory.

Working with the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Electrical Company Limited, the Yukon government will seek public input on IPP and net metering policy to ensure that the resulting policy reflects the needs of all Yukoners. This consultation will be a step forward toward fulfilling the energy strategy commitment to develop a policy that will facilitate the purchase of electricity from independent power producers and allow individual Yukoners to connect clean energy sources to the grid.

The IPP policy will enable individuals and organizations other than utilities to generate electricity for communities or industrial projects in remote areas. Net metering will enable electricity customers to sell surplus electricity from clean energy sources to the grid and receive a credit on their electrical bill. A more diversified mix of power producers will serve to strengthen Yukon's energy security, keep electric rates low and make the electrical system more reliable.

There was widespread public support for IPP and net metering during the public consultation on the energy strategy. Yukon government is taking steps to fulfill the commitments made to Yukoners in the energy strategy. Looking ahead to increase diverse development of Yukon energy resources, the department is working with the oil and gas industry and other stakeholders on developing best management practices for industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, the best management practices advice will be based on an agreed set of management objectives and will provide result-based advice that allows industry to also put forward suggestions for greenhouse gas reduction that meets the agreed-upon objectives. The initiative will start with the oil and gas and will focus on the scale of activity predicted to occur over the next 10 years. The best management practices for the oil and gas sector could eventually be used as a model for other sectors.

In closing, I hope that all governments recognize that climate change is one of our greatest challenges. Across governments, we must work collaboratively to address this issue. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is committed to continue our efforts to better understand the impact of climate change on our natural resources. We will also continue to ensure Yukon's energy resources are managed in a sustainable manner that supports Yukoners' efforts to reduce our impact on climate change.

**Mr. Elias:** It's an honour to stand and discuss this most important issue on the floor of the Legislative Assembly today and discuss Motion No. 890. I'll begin by speaking to some of the recent science that was released as early as this morning from the United Nations World Meteorological Organization.

They put out a press release this morning in Geneva where they said that greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere reached record highs in 2008 with carbon dioxide levels increasing faster than previously thought. They also said this morning that carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas in the

atmosphere — was 385.2 parts per million in 2008 — up two parts per million from 2007.

As a matter of fact, this morning they put out the fact that since 1750, carbon dioxide has increased 38 percent, nitrous oxide by 19 percent, and methane by 157 percent. Again, that's according to the United Nations. That's just a part of the scientific data they released this morning.

In addition to this press release, some of the most recent science I found was that the collective impact of six billion people on the planet is altering the physical and biological properties of the earth. The very fact of living poses a great demand on the earth and its resources. Today these impacts are seen in a variety of places with dire consequences for all the Earth's inhabitants.

So what's in the latest climate change science? What's it saying in terms of the impacts to people on the planet? For starters, in 10 years, 75 percent of the glaciers will be totally gone. Billions of people will experience severe water shortages all over the world. Additionally, the shortage of water will be tied to a shortage of food, since food cannot be grown without water. Northern communities relying on food grown in the south will contend with extremely high food prices. Many communities already do.

The latest science also shows the Arctic Ocean is melting at an alarming rate. This ice itself contains greenhouse gases which, when melted, release these greenhouse gases into the atmosphere causing an accelerated rate of warming. This is called a positive feedback effect. At the current rate of the melt, the Arctic Ocean may be totally ice-free during the summer months in as little as five years. This will have a major impact on the Arctic, its residents, and fish and wildlife populations.

Oceans worldwide are experiencing severe oxygen depletion. These areas are called dead zones and they are consistently growing. As a result, many types of shellfish are now experiencing a form of osteoporosis — evident in their inability to grow hard shells for protection.

Moreover, more methane is being released from the warming oceans, similar to the melting of the ice in the Arctic. This release of methane from the oceans will also cause accelerated warming of the planet, and it is another positive feedback effect. Those are just some of the recent statistics with regard to science that are going to be presented at Copenhagen in a few weeks.

I would just like to support the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's comments about all of the organizations — the NGOs, the governments, the Arctic Council, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the territorial government. There are many Yukoners who are going over to Copenhagen.

The first thing that came to my mind was that maybe, in this short period of time, the territorial government can take the lead on organizing maybe a Yukon Day, where all of the organizations can get together and share with the world what's going on here in the territory. Maybe it's being done already; I'm not sure. I just haven't heard about it yet.

But there are a number of organizations that are going from the Yukon and coming together and sharing the stories with the world. It will bode well, I believe, for our territory.

I appreciate a lot of the comments that have been made so far in the debate. People have mentioned several times about what's at stake. I'll tell you what's at stake for the people, the fish and wildlife and the water and the land in my riding.

About seven years ago now, some elders walked across the confluence of the Crow River and the Porcupine River, and they had been doing this since they were kids, on that same stretch of ice, during the same period of time, to catch the migration of the fish. A tragedy happened: one of our elders fell through the ice — a stretch of ice she has walked across all her life. She drowned. Whether that's attributed to global warming we don't know, but it did cause a hesitancy to do that in the community. This was in late October, early November when the ice should be a metre thick. Those are the kinds of things we have to deal with in my riding.

You know, the Porcupine River breaks up three weeks early. It is changing the migration patterns of the Porcupine caribou herd and of the migratory moose populations — early green-up areas in the flats; early mosquitoes harassing the cows and the calves. You know we've had to dam lakes in the Old Crow Flats so that they didn't drain out. There have been two of them now where we as a community have had to do that to stop the lakes from draining out of the system.

I have said it in this House many times. On June 6, 2007, three large lakes in my family's traditional area catastrophically left the system; I watched those lakes drain. Those are real things that are happening in our territory — real effects on culture and real effects on ecosystems.

When we talk about climate change, it's all dangerous. There's no climate change that's not dangerous any more. During the last few years, through the International Polar Year exercise, my community of Old Crow has taken a leadership role in complementing the traditional knowledge and science with community-based initiatives, looking at the paleo-climate and the past climate variability through ice cores, through permafrost studies with regard to the impact of climate on the melting of permafrost. When permafrost melts in the Old Crow Flats, it releases methane gas.

We have looked at vegetation, recent and ancient vegetation history; our muskrat populations — the populations and their genetic structure over time; with regard to our moose populations in the Old Crow Flats, with regard to their habitat selection and migration patterns; and food security in north Yukon, because one day we might have to work toward an adaptation plan.

When I hear of 77 developing nations last month walking out on Canada's address during the climate change talks in Thailand — because of what they viewed as abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol — it's discouraging and it's not setting the stage for success in Copenhagen. It's worrisome. On the other hand, I've been following the talks that are leading up to Copenhagen. I'm starting to see a lot of leaders and individuals — influential individuals — having a bit of a defeatist attitude toward some major accomplishments in the near future. To me,



that's troublesome in itself, because our children are watching us. I for one don't want to participate in that level of discussion, suggesting that it's too late — it's never too late. I'm always telling the youth of my community that we're never going to give up. As far as I'm concerned, we're always going to fight against climate change.

I just wanted to put those thoughts on the record today and the debate for the motion. I've said so many things in Question Period and in general debate and in responses to speeches over the years on the floor of this Assembly and I stand by each and every one of those words. I just hope that our Government of Canada can make some significant advancements in Copenhagen, because we are leaders in the world and we have to lead on the climate-change front, because right now we're not. With that, I'll leave it at that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to talk for a few minutes about this motion. I think that each of us here can think of examples where our environment is experiencing significant change. As I travel between the communities in my riding, I often reflect how the climate has changed, how our environment has changed. I look at this series of hot and dry summers that we have experienced recently. I ponder the impact of the forest fires a few years ago and again this year.

In speaking with the elders, I am again reminded of how much their world is changed. I think traditional knowledge has much to offer in terms of understanding climate change. Because we live in the north, I think we see the effects of climate change more than in other jurisdictions farther south. We see the changes in our forests and, as I mentioned, in our wildlife. It seems as if more of our forests are falling prey to beetles because we no longer get the cold weather that would kill them. I am pleased that the Government of Yukon is studying the impacts of climate change on Yukon forests with a comprehensive three-year research initiative that started this year.

My colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has shared with me that northern tree species are particularly susceptible to the challenges of climate change. I understand that he is undertaking to do more research that will investigate the vulnerabilities to climate change and adaptive capacities of Yukon tree species and forest ecosystems.

Forest research is one of the adaptation actions called for in Yukon's climate change action plan. Funding and staff support for the research initiative is being provided by UNBC and Government of Yukon, with an additional \$175,000 commitment by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada under the impacts and adaptation fund. The study area for the project includes all of the forested areas of Yukon, with particular emphasis on areas where forest management planning is completed or underway.

Researchers will develop a Yukon framework and methodology to apply the findings of this study and the recently released Canadian Council of Forest Ministers report, entitled *Vulnerability of Canada's Tree Species to Climate Change*.

I would like to talk for a moment about our highways. The transportation corridors are certainly experiencing great change. I read studies that suggest a shipping route through the polar sea may be a reality much, much sooner than anyone ever imagined. A little closer to home, I would also note that highways like the Dempster Highway and the Alaska Highway both experience significant changes because of climate change. I think the frost heaves or swales along the Alaska Highway between Haines Junction and Beaver Creek were ground that was once frozen that is now beginning to thaw, and that means the road is shifting. One of the questions I ask myself is, what can we do to address this concern?

When I ran for office, one of the things I campaigned on was a way to help seniors stay in their home communities. I campaigned on finding ways to increase the inventory of affordable housing for seniors and elders in the Yukon. I wanted to consult with elders and seniors on the need for seniors facilities in Teslin and other communities. One of the things I heard was that we need to build these facilities to the highest energy-efficient standards possible.

Let me share with this Assembly what we have done to address climate change in these buildings. By working closely with the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and the Yukon senator, we were able to jointly announce, with Canada, the development of housing projects in both Faro and Teslin. Minister Finley, in announcing these projects, stated that through this investment we are helping make an important difference in the lives of individuals and families in Faro and Teslin who are trying to build a better future for themselves.

By working with Canada, Yukon government is able to launch several important housing projects in the territory. This access to affordable and accommodating housing gives seniors the option of staying in their communities as they grow older. Faro and Teslin will benefit from retaining this important generation within their population.

Mr. Speaker, I feel so strongly that we need to keep our elders and seniors in our home communities. They are so important in transmitting the culture of our people from one generation to the next. Canada's economic action plan will provide \$2 million to construct a seniors residence in Faro, which is one of the biggest ratio of seniors and near seniors among Yukon municipalities. The residence will contain six one-bedroom suites. The action plan includes funding of \$2.7 million that was approved for a seniors residence in Teslin. The residence will contain seven one-bedroom suites and one two-bedroom suite. Two of the seven units are for seniors with a disability. Both buildings are wood frame construction and feature super green energy efficiency standards and accommodating home standards for a barrier-free living environment. This is a win-win-win situation, Mr. Speaker. We have increased our stock of housing for seniors. We are increasing that housing stock in our communities so that seniors and elders can stay closer to their loved ones. It is a win because we are building to super green standards.

Speaking of building things to high standards, I would like to mention three buildings that I as a minister have had some input into. The first is a new Habitat for Humanity building

over on Wheeler Street. As everyone in this Assembly knows, this project is very exciting for all kinds of reasons. It represents a new phase in the life of that community. It is a bright hope for going forward. This project is being built to super green standards. I have to say that, as a minister, I am simply thrilled at how this location has gone from being a negative to a positive impact in the downtown.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about the new multi-purpose correctional and treatment centre. This building is being built to LEED silver standards. Let me give you some idea of the scope of this building. There will be a gathering room that will be used for recreation activities, larger group programs and special occasions; a unique program area that will be used for treatment and healing programming and First Nation cultural programming; a classroom for educational and other programming; another program room and four program offices; program rooms in the living units; a small workshop; staff meeting and training areas; a fully equipped dental suite and nursing station that will provide services to inmates and others as scheduled; a second-floor visitor reception area and administration area; a main floor common services wing. This includes the kitchen, health services, admission and discharge areas.

The living units have been designed to accommodate our small yet diverse populations. There are separate living areas for men and women. The women have one three-tiered living unit with 14 cells for general population and four cells for segregation and observation. The men's living area is made up of an area separated generally as follows: 70 general population cells in four different living units, seven cells in a special handling unit and seven cells in a segregation and observation unit.

Any changes we make that will make this building more efficient will have a significant impact on Yukon, both now and long into the future. That is why our government designed the new facility to be built to a LEED silver standard.

One of my concerns going into the development of this new facility was that it be efficient, both now and, again, long into the future. The last facility has served the Yukon for some 40 years. When I look at the whole life-cost for the new facility, one of my concerns is that we look for ways to minimize our long-term costs.

I would also like to talk for a few minutes about the way we are making changes in the Women's Directorate. As I see it, one of the most effective ways we can impact climate change is by each of us making small, daily changes. You know, these changes, when summed up over the course of a year or lifetime, can have a very dramatic impact. The Women's Directorate is contributing to the Government of Yukon's climate change action plan through its daily business practices and through the Whitehorse affordable family housing initiative.

Let me first talk about the small changes we are making in our daily business practices. Departmental staff have a clear understanding that office business has a direct impact on climate change and are always looking for new and innovative ways to green their work. Within the office, Women's Directorate staff have taken initiatives to reduce waste and energy use and promote initiatives that increase green action in the

workplace. A few examples include initiating a composting system within the department, carpooling at all opportunities, encouraging the use of self-propelled and public transit to and from work, promoting rigorous energy conservation by ensuring all lights are turned off when not being used, thermostats are turned down on weekends and evenings, and other energy-saving measures, and recycling at every opportunity. I thank the department for these green savings.

In addition to the consideration of the individual and collective impact on greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, our government in the development of the Whitehorse affordable family housing project has ensured that super green energy standards are being used.

As you may know, construction of the 32-unit, apartment-style affordable family project on Nisutlin Drive will continue throughout the winter generating employment for trades. Completion is anticipated for the fall 2010. The two-storey wood frame construction will feature super green energy efficiency standards and accommodating home standards for a barrier-free living environment. I would like to share with my constituents what we mean when we talk about the super green standard.

Super green represents a new Yukon Housing Corporation standard of construction and goes further than the green home standard that Yukon Housing Corporation has been promoting since 1999. The super green standard calls for superior insulation of the home and an advanced framing design featuring a 16-inch thick, uninterrupted blanket of insulation in the walls, as well as much higher levels of insulation in the attic and under the foundation than typical construction.

The super green home has a minimum 87 EnerGuide rating — 80 for green home on the EnerGuide evaluation program. We use the term green to indicate better energy efficiency than today's average house, which translates to heating affordability. The super green standard is an update on the green home energy standard in an effort to bring housing efficiency into the needs of this decade.

On Natural Resource Canada's EnerGuide evaluation program, super green must achieve an EnerGuide rating of 87 or better. Several upgrades are required to meet this standard. To achieve this high level of energy rating in a practical manner, conventional framing techniques cannot be used effectively, as there is a greater need for more consistent thermal break of the wood through the wall. The design works best when wood framing that bridges the inside to the outside is eliminated because heat is transferred through wood.

Yukon Housing Corporation's wall design utilizes an uninterrupted 16-inch thick blanket of cellulose insulation from the foundation, through the walls, and into the attic. The walls are built with pre-manufactured double studs, similar to roof trusses, which can provide that thick, continuous blanket of insulation in between. The efficient heat recovery ventilation of the green home standard still applies to the super green designs.

My constituents often share with me their concerns over the rising cost of maintaining a home. Many ask me how they can reduce their energy costs. Energy costs have risen significantly since the energy-efficiency standards were originally introduced in the 1970s. Even since Yukon Housing Corpora-

tion launched its green home program in 1999, Yukon Housing Corporation continues to strive for ways to offset those costs with advanced design and standards. The green home standard still represents a considerable improvement over the average construction, which translates into energy savings for the homeowner. The super green standard is an upgrade. It is economic to build in today's fuel prices, and ensures long-term affordability. Yukon Housing Corporation supports both standards with advice and financial incentives. The cost of building to the super green standard can be offset in a relatively short period of time by reduced energy costs.

Most significantly, the extra investment improves the long-term affordability of the house. The savings in heating costs alone can be expected to greatly pay off in the long run, possibly in as little as nine years, according to analysis, using current oil-cost payback over standard construction.

As oil prices continue to rise, the payback term of the super green investment will further decrease. Additionally, a well-built, properly ventilated super green house could last indefinitely. Super-efficient homes can provide greater comfort and indoor air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent moisture and mould problems and, of course, lower the heating bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a great motion. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Speaker, normally we would go back and forth between the government side and the opposition side but I trust other opposition members want to put their comments on the record. I rise in support of the motion today and would encourage all members of our Assembly to do so. I think this is another opportunity where we can work together to send a strong message to the federal government and also to send a message to others that, yes, we do on occasion work together in this Assembly. There are issues that are important to all Yukoners and we can put aside our political differences and take action to address those issues.

This is indeed a very important issue that is facing the entire planet. It is having a significant impact here on life in the north and also in other places around the globe that are feeling the impacts more than others.

The ramifications of the impacts, though — well, they're challenging. In many cases, the areas that contribute the most to this problem feel the effects the least. Others who do their best to limit their impacts feel it the greatest. It's one of the issues around the world that isn't going to affect everyone equally, but we all know that it's going to affect life on this planet.

We do have challenges in our political structures on this planet with different economies, different regulatory regimes, different governments, different philosophies and different values. I think that we, as human beings, all need to take a position on this issue, recognize the issue, and call upon all orders of government to take action to address it.

We've heard from different speakers already today that the world is a different place than it was 100 years ago. I've had this discussion with many people and we take a look and say, "Yes, the world is a very different place." One hundred years

ago we had about one billion people on the planet; today we have six billion people. One hundred years ago, electricity, internal-combustion vehicles, airplanes or huge power plants weren't something we saw then and today they are commonplace. We've seen tremendous changes in human behaviour. We've seen tremendous changes in how humans live. We now have situations where our homes are heated by gas, propane or other fossil fuels. We're now in the practice of driving literally hundreds of kilometres every day, which is a contributing factor to this. We're now seeing foods — that instead of coming from our backyard are coming from different continents. We're seeing this as a normal part of our day-to-day behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't that long ago that someone commented to me of their frustration that they could not find organically grown strawberries in the grocery store in February. They could find regular strawberries in the grocery store in February, but they couldn't find their favourite brand of organically grown strawberries.

It has now become commonplace for us to expect that fruits and vegetables from literally halfway around the world will be flown to us, and ready for our table. There are certainly implications and ramifications of our lifestyle choices for these types of things. We have to take into consideration the ramification of each of our decisions, and the impact that that's going to have.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing significant grassroots movements in this area. We're seeing people standing up and saying that they want to ensure that we have a safer, stronger environment. They're calling upon us to take action, and calling upon other orders of government to take action as well. We do need to take a careful look at the decisions that we as individuals make every day, how we can think globally and yet act locally. We, in this Assembly, have a larger opportunity. We have the opportunity to represent the territory, and to send our message to our federal government to encourage them to work with their colleagues from around the globe — those government leaders, those community leaders, those educational leaders — toward addressing this situation.

We are certainly going to need additional steps and information in order to prevent the situation from worsening. We'll also have to take steps in order to react, or to adapt, to our changing climate. Now, that isn't to say, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to throw our hands up in defeat and accept everything, but it is part of the realization that there are changes happening out there in our world and that we do have to adapt and change our behaviours, our construction techniques and our lifestyles.

You've heard a lot about the different government departments and different areas of responsibility. In Education, I see that we have three very key themes that we can address: one, being to educate; two, being to learn; and, three, being to apply. I keep going around as to which one is the most important.

We need to learn more about our situation. We need to look at what is changing. We need to be able to study the forests, as the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources announced earlier today, to see how the forests are changing in our current climate. We need to have that informa-

tion so that we can guide future decisions. We need to continue to learn how to respond and to adapt to situations. We need to look at how to build different roads or different infrastructure, as the Minister of Justice was discussing, to ensure that we maximize our resources. We also have to look at how we as a society will be impacted and also, then, how we can respond to that.

In this category or theme of learning, I'm very glad to see the establishment of the Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence at Yukon College. This is a facility that will expand our research capacity and facilitate and coordinate research activities. It has gotten off the ground already and has done some very good work building upon what the Northern Climate ExChange has done, what other researchers have done before us, and it will continue to assist future researchers and academics and practical practitioners to look at the situations that we are finding ourselves in, to look at the underlying causes of those, and to look at ways of addressing them or mitigating them.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a significant responsibility to apply the knowledge that we have. The Department of Education is endeavouring to practice what you preach — if you will — through a variety of different programs. These include building new structures to LEED standards and developing an environmental stewardship program that will guide people in how they will make decisions, or look at different situations, or examine things like the efficient way of using resources like printer paper or copier paper, or even the disposal of printers and photocopiers, or other e-waste. We also, Mr. Speaker, have to practice what we preach in how we deal with solid waste coming out of our schools.

I'm glad to see that with the participation of the Minister of Environment, and her strong support for this initiative, that we have been able to increase funding to schools to assist them in their waste diversion programs, from looking at how we can reduce the amount of paper products that are produced to how we can recycle it and then, ultimately, how we can compost or dispose of some of the materials that we are no longer using in our schools. So we have an opportunity to lead by example in these areas.

I'll build on that. It's not just an opportunity; it's a responsibility.

We have had various discussions in this Assembly regarding this issue and we've all heard the different arguments out there as to why some countries aren't involved in this. We do know that we do have a global situation and that we need to see the involvement all of the countries on the planet, including China, India, United States, Russia and, of course, Canada.

We all realize that these choices don't come without costs, both for and against, so we do have a responsibility to lead in this regard. There are economies in the world that may not have the resources to respond as expediently as we would like them to, but we have a responsibility to lead by example. I think that our community — the citizens — are telling us that this is a very important issue and that even if other jurisdictions aren't fully coming on board all the way, we need to take action.

Of course, this does create different regulatory frameworks, or different levels of standards that could create economic imbalances, but we'll have to respond to that as a country and as a territory. This isn't going to go without some challenges in addressing these issues and we can either choose to invest the money now or we can choose to make huge investments later on in our future.

Mr. Speaker, I also said that another area or another theme for the Department of Education to address is, of course, education. We have a responsibility to teach our young people, our students, our learners about these issues, whether that's by incorporating their programming into science classes, or math classes, or other school curriculum, or by putting in place special programs and things like the recycling club or the Y2C2 conservation corps type of program.

We have a responsibility to educate our young people in critical thinking so that they can look at the ramifications of their decisions and they can take a look at different pieces of evidence and make decisions for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly in support of this motion. It calls for us to work together collaboratively. It calls for us to work with the federal government and it certainly calls upon the federal government to work with our international partners to address this global issue. We have opportunities and responsibilities within the Department of Education to educate, to facilitate the learning and the gaining of new information, and also to apply what we have learned in our day-to-day operations and to effect changes in our operations.

I endorse this motion. I would ask that all members of our Assembly show their support for it and vote in favour of this motion.

**Mr. Edzerza:** I also rise today in support of this motion. I know our traditional belief is that it is our job as humans on this Earth to protect Mother Earth and to ensure that Mother Earth is a provider and is able to continue to provide for people on this Earth.

Some of the comments I am going to make today I was able to obtain from the David Suzuki Foundation, where it states that climate change is considered by many scientists to be the most serious threat facing the world today. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Solutions include phasing out coal plants, expanding renewable energy sources and public transit and creating new efficiency standards for vehicles and buildings.

Mr. Speaker, in December, the world's nations will meet at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen to negotiate a new strong and fair climate change agreement that will continue and strengthen the Kyoto Protocol. Scientists tell us that to avoid dangerous climate change, governments must agree to deep reductions in greenhouse gases, including carbon emissions from the destruction of our forests, wetlands and other ecosystems. I might add also that the treaties that are drawn up and agreed to by different countries are only as good as the actions and the support that each country will give that agreement. If

they're not honoured, then the agreements are virtually worthless on paper.

We know that the effects of climate change are now affecting people and places all over the planet, from the most remote tropical rainforests to the urban parts where many of our kids play. Scientists tell us that some changes like melting ice in the Arctic are happening much faster than any computer model had predicted.

Mr. Speaker, on a more down-to-earth and personal note, I have talked to elders from the Arctic, and they talked about changes in animal behaviour. The First Nations who lived in these remote areas have monitored the environment for thousands of years. It's not new to them. They knew that a lot of changes were happening in the Arctic that were someday going to create great problems. They weren't able to say exactly what those problems were at the time, but now they're starting to talk about a lot of changes to animal behaviour, for example, finding animals in places where they never existed before, different species of animals showing up — some that they don't know what they are.

I know some of the elders talked about how in some areas where they only saw ice and snow, there's now a mountain there made of rock. Land has appeared there, because the ice and the snow that once covered it is no longer there. There are a lot of changes to the geological landmarks that they once were able to use. There are a lot of changes that they're going to have to get used to — identifying areas by other means than by the ice packs that were there. They also talked about how difficult it is to find some of the species of animals that used to live in their area. They can't find some any more, because they've now moved. I have talked to some individuals from Old Crow who talk of the Porcupine caribou herd changing their migration pattern. It's a big thing; it's a big change for them. Sometimes they aren't able to locate the caribou because they have moved such a great distance away from the community.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to put on the record the term — which I have heard mentioned, but had no understanding of — “acid rain”. Who would ever have imagined rain could be harmful? I have only known it to be a blessing, and it helps plants grow. Now I hear that the falling rain can actually be harmful. I've often wondered what was meant by “acid rain”. What do you mean by “acid rain”? When that terminology is used, I would probably be safe to say that the majority of people living on this Earth don't even know what it is.

Well, I went on the Internet, and I looked up a few things from Environment Canada. I just wanted to put on record, really, what acid rain is, so that people can understand what we mean when we say that different emissions in the air can cause problems.

Acid deposition is a general term that includes more than simply acid rain. Acid deposition primarily results from the transformation of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides into dry and moist secondary pollutants, such as sulfuric acid, ammonium nitrates and nitric acid.

All of those words sound really scary to me. I know a little bit about acid and I know acid can burn. It can actually burn

your skin or your eyes or whatever. The transformation of sulphuric dioxides and nitrogen oxides, acidic particles and vapours occurs as these pollutants are transported in the atmosphere over distances of hundreds of thousands of kilometres. Acidic particles and vapours are deposited via two processes — wet and dry disposition. Wet disposition is acid rain, the process by which acids with the pH normally below 5.6 are removed from the atmosphere in rain, snow, sleet or hail. Now who would ever believe that that could create harm to you — being in a snowstorm? It's unbelievable.

Dry disposition takes place when particles such as fly ash, sulphates, nitrates and gases are deposited on or absorbed into surfaces. The gases can then be converted into acids when they contact water — again, something that most people would never ever dream of thinking that you had to be aware of.

Never in my life have I ever heard how these toxins can be transported around the world just through snowstorms and rainstorms. It's something that never ever entered my mind, I know, and probably a lot of people around the world aren't even aware of just how destructive it can be to have these kinds of toxins in the air. Again, I think it's important to put on record where some of these toxins really come from. Where do sulfur dioxide emissions come from? Sulfur dioxide is generally a product of industrial processes and burning of fossil fuels. Ore smelting, coal-fire power generators and natural gas processing are the main contributors. In 2000 for instance, U.S. sulphur dioxide emissions were measured at 14.8 million tonnes — more than six times greater than Canada's 2.4 million tonnes. The sources of sulphur dioxide emissions from the two countries are different. In Canada, 68 percent of emissions come from industrial sources and 27 percent come from electric utilities. In the U.S., 67 percent of emissions are from electric utilities.

Canada cannot win the fight against acid rain on its own. Only reducing acidic emissions in both Canada and the United States will stop acid rain. More than half of the acid deposition in eastern Canada originates from emissions in the United States. Areas such as southeastern Ontario, in Longwoods, and Sutton, Quebec receive about three-quarters of their acid deposition from the United States. In 1995, the estimated transboundary flow of sulphur dioxide from the United States to Canada was between 3.5 and 4.2 million tonnes per year.

I also want to talk a little bit about some other emissions that create a lot of problems. That has to do with a lot of combustion of fuels — for example, in motor vehicles, residential and commercial furnaces, industrial and electrical utilities, boilers and engines and other equipment.

In 2000, Canada's largest contributor of NOx was the transportation sector. Who would ever believe that the transportation used so commonly every day was actually so hazardous? I know that I, for one, never had any kind of train of thought in my mind over the years that I've been on this Earth that all the transportation that we take for granted is really polluting the air.

Having put that on record, I would also like to put on record a little bit of our traditional beliefs. Traditionally, a lot of our life is dealt with in logic. First Nation people are very logi-

cal thinkers and there is a lot to that. It is logical to believe that if you dump oil in the river or if you pollute a river, everything that lives in that water has the potential to be destroyed. It is logical to think there can actually be enough contamination of the water on this Earth to not be able to sustain life. That is a possibility. It is logical to believe that if we continue to cut down all the timber in the forests on this Earth that the dirt might dry up and blow away. A lot of our beliefs really focus on logic.

It works the other way. It's logical to believe and to know that if man protects Mother Earth the way they're supposed to, there won't be as much destruction on this Earth as there is today. It's logical to believe that if you don't go around setting fires — and by not watching your campfires and creating all kinds of forests to be burned, some day it's going to be a real big problem for all people on this Earth. It's logical to believe that all the smoke going into the air from forest fires and all the industrial plants can someday make it so that we won't be able to live with the air surrounding Mother Earth. Probably a lot of us didn't put much thought having to walk around in our daily lives with some kind of a gas mask on to filter the air, but it's logical to actually believe that it can come to that.

I know one incident that really made me aware of this very fact was when I was going to Los Angeles one time in a plane and the pilot said that all the people on the right-hand side should look out their window a little bit to the southwest to see this beautiful coloured cloud that was there against a nice clear blue background. He pointed that out and said in case we are going into Los Angeles — that is where it is. When you are walking around in the City of Los Angeles, you don't see that colour. You don't see the air that is that colour.

One thing that I did notice about that air is that it tasted awful sweet. I kept trying to think of where I experienced that kind of a taste and I remembered that one time, many years ago, when I accidentally got some antifreeze on my mouth. When I was wiping it off, I remembered that taste. The air that I was breathing in Los Angeles, I believe, had a lot of emissions from the cars and that is what I was tasting — that horrible taste, almost like an exhaust of some kind.

I think the reason I wanted to put some of this on record today was that so people who take things for granted will, in fact, start to do a little bit of research, and try to understand that some of the things that you can't see are actually what will destroy you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Nordick:** It gives me great pleasure to speak to Motion No. 890 today and to support this motion that urges the Government of Canada and the national governments to make every effort to reach an international agreement on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, temperature increases are not the only effect of climate change currently being observed. The global average sea level rise over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been approximately 0.17 metres. The global sea level rose approximately 1.8 millimetres per year between 1961 and 2003, and rose about 3.1 millimetres per year between 1993 and 2003.

As with the global average temperature trends, the global average sea level is rising at an accelerated rate in recent years. There are various factors responsible for contributing to sea level rise, such as thermal expansion, glacial melt contribution and the Greenland and Arctic ice sheets melt contribution.

When heated water expands as the earth's atmosphere warms, so do the oceans. Simply put, the atmosphere is warming, causing the ocean to warm. Because the oceans are warming, they are expanding, which causes the sea levels to rise. The fact that sea levels rise in response to ocean warming is not good news. Considering that global average temperatures are expected to continue to rise in the future, another problem is that the oceans experience a lag in warming due to their strong thermal inertia. This means that even if temperatures were to stop rising and stabilize, sea levels would continue to rise for some time into the future.

Meltwater from Greenland's ice sheet, the Antarctic ice sheet and from glaciers are all contributing factors to rising sea levels. As temperatures warm, ice sheet and glacier melt increases. The world's ice sheets and glaciers hold an enormous amount of water and thus have the potential to contribute significantly to future sea level rises.

Sea ice is an important part of the Arctic landscape. It provides habitat space for species of birds and animals as well as important hunting and breeding spaces. Sea ice also plays important roles in the climate due to its highly reflective property. As sea ice diminishes in extent, so does its ability to reflect radiation back from the surface. This speeds the warming experience in the area as more solar radiation is absorbed by the lower surfaces. Sea ice extent in the Arctic is measured by satellites. Since 1979, it has been observed that Arctic sea ice that survives through the summer has decreased by approximately 7.4 percent per decade. At the current rate of disappearance, it is expected that the Arctic will experience almost completely ice-free summers by the end of the century.

Mr. Speaker, the retreat of mountain glaciers is one of the most visible effects of climate change that we are observing today. One would only have to look at a photo of McCarty Glacier in 1909. You can look at a picture and see that it extended through half of the photo, and in 2004 it doesn't even appear in the photo. That is a retreat of over 20 kilometres, although instrumental measurements of such retreat is difficult due to the difficulty in accessing most glaciers and the expanse involved in such studies.

Glaciers provide an important fresh water source for many parts of the world. A loss of mountain glaciers can impact fresh water availability for many, including parts of western Canada. Melting glaciers are an important contribution factor to sea-level rise. As the climate warms, glaciers retreat at an accelerated rate, thus compounding the problems of rising sea levels.

Mr. Speaker, in my community in the Yukon, we have an issue with permafrost. Permafrost is a layer of soil or rock that remains at below freezing throughout the year. Permafrost is found at the higher latitudes where average surface temperatures are low enough to support persistence of this frozen layer. Because permafrost is dependent on surface temperatures, warming in high latitudes greatly affects permafrost stability.

Thawing permafrost has grave implications on the regions affected, from the collapses of structures built on the permafrost, to vegetation changes. As a result, thawing permafrost greatly affects all those who inhabit these regions — from the people, to animals to vegetation. One just has to take a drive up some of our highways to see the effects of permafrost.

Mr. Speaker, adaptation is necessary, but it is not the whole answer. It has more potential impact, particularly in the short term, on human systems than on natural systems. It is important to recognize that adaptation will not be enough to completely protect Arctic ecosystems. If there is to be any chance of protecting Arctic ecosystems in the long term, international efforts will need to be put toward mitigation, as well as adaptation.

Clause 3 in this motion states: “Addressing climate change requires collaboration and action at all levels of government.” The common ground of mitigation and adaptation is changing human behaviour. Both approaches require us to rethink and revise the way we conduct our individual, social and economic lives. This is not a change that can be imposed by senior levels of government or distant authorities. The key to changing behaviour is knowledge absorbed at the individual and local levels, an understanding of why we must make changes, ideas about what changes to make, and an assessment of potential impacts and benefits of those changes.

That is why we need to partner with levels of government and citizens. We need to partner with the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada sets and promotes broad goals for addressing climate change at the national level. It sets related federal regulations and standards and has a number of initiatives related to climate change in place.

It has funding programs designed to support climate change work by other organizations, including initiatives in the north. Canada also participates in international forums and agreements on climate change. Mr. Speaker, we need to partner with intergovernmental and international forums that address climate change and network on related topics that include but are not limited to groups such as the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, the Council of the Federation, the western premiers forum, the northern premiers forum, and the Arctic Council.

Mr. Speaker, we need to partner with non-governmental organizations. All the NGOs in the Yukon need to be involved in climate change initiatives. We need to partner with privately owned businesses. Many Yukon-based businesses are already taking actions to respond to climate change. We need to partner with the public. Many individual Yukoners have made a conscious decision to reduce the contribution to climate change and adapt as necessary. One way is to improve energy conservation and efficiency in their homes which results in cost savings, as well as reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

We need to partner with universities and research institutes. Many universities and research organizations based outside the Yukon actively engage in research projects related to climate change here. These organizations contribute expertise, knowledge and funding to climate change initiatives in the

Yukon. They often collaborate with local research organizations and communities in their work. We need to partner with Yukon College through the Northern Research Institute and the Northern Climate ExChange. We need to partner with Yukon First Nations. Mr. Speaker, Yukon First Nations are involved in the delivery of a variety of programs to their citizens and are committed to addressing climate change through the use of traditional knowledge and other means. We also need to partner with our municipalities. Municipal governments are engaged in the development and implementation of integrated community sustainability plans. These plans address issues such as community energy systems, public transit, waste disposal and energy efficiencies.

Along with partnering with citizens of the Yukon and other levels of government, our entire government has to take a collaborative approach to dealing with climate change. I will briefly go through what is stated in our climate change action plan. It is quite essential that we get this on the record that Community Services is responsible for the local area planning in rural areas, vehicle licensing and registration, building codes and standards, emergency preparedness, operation of solid waste sites and infrastructure development.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Economic Development is responsible for programs to assist business development in the territory, including ones that may address the new threats or opportunities presented by climate change.

Education is responsible for public education in the Yukon, including the development of school curriculum that addresses climate change issues. Energy, Mines and Resources is responsible for developing territorial energy policies designed to deliver public programs on energy conservation and efficiency, managing the development of pipelines in the territory, forest resource management, geological soil and permafrost surveys, agricultural management and regulating Yukon mineral resources, oil and gas resources, and regional land use planning.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment is responsible for wildlife monitoring and management, biodiversity and ecosystems, air and water quality, hydrological monitoring, environmental education, territorial waste reduction and recycling programs, environmental protection, and the preparation of this action plan which I am reading from.

There is so much in this Yukon climate change action plan and I would encourage all members and the general public to go on-line and take a look at it. It is quite informational.

The Executive Council Office is responsible for supporting the incorporation of northern technology, knowledge and experience, climate change plans and programs. Health and Social Services is responsible for health care and health programs that may be needed to address climate change related issues.

Highways and Public Works is responsible for the Yukon highways aviation and marine infrastructure. As we're all aware, climate change does dramatically affect our highways. Tourism and Culture is responsible for managing heritage sites and artifacts, encouraging the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, supporting Yukon's tourism industry and promoting best practices in industry, and providing licences to

researchers and scientists doing work in the Yukon and conducting research on the Yukon's history.

Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Housing Corporation — we have to have a collaborative approach with all our corporations. Mr. Speaker, I could continue all day with the great initiatives that we have in our climate change action plan. I could speak on goal 1: enhance knowledge and understanding of climate change. The actions we will take to advance this goal focus on research and understanding. I could speak all day on how to improve our ability to adapt to climate change and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The Yukon has to lead in actions in response to climate change.

On November 5, 2009, the Yukon government announced a solid waste action plan, a new action plan that outlines a vision for modern sustainable waste management systems, which is suited to the Yukon's climate.

On October 21, 2009, the Yukon government committed \$452,000 to Yukon College in the 2009-10 budget to support the start-up of the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence. The creation of the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence builds on the Yukon government's commitment, as outlined in the climate change action plan, to expand on research capability and knowledge on northern climate change.

Our Deputy Premier, the Minister of Environment, also attended the second annual Governors' Global Climate Summit in Los Angeles, hosted by the California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

We are bringing climate change to the national front. We are bringing Yukon's opinions, research and knowledge to the national stage.

This government is increasing funding for recycling. Our government is providing \$320,000 to Raven Recycling over the next two years to ensure Raven Recycling can continue to offer Yukoners a comprehensive recycling and processing service. This organization contributes to the economy both in jobs and exports and to the environment by helping divert non-refundable items from our landfills. Our government supports a number of recycling initiatives across the territory, which include operating funds for community depots and funding for capital equipment and a new school recycling program. Funding for recycling activities in 2009-10 is estimated to be \$1.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, I can see that I am running out of time, but I will list off a couple of other initiatives. For the joint initiative to promote fabric shopping bag use, we provided funds to support environmental awareness in Yukon. We held an environmental forum in May.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to go to our government website and all citizens to go to our government website and see the news releases regarding all the many things that we are doing. Because we are only allowed 20 minutes, my time is too short here today to list off the many things that we are currently doing. I would like to close by saying I fully support this motion. I encourage all members to support it.

I'm quite interested to hear what the Leader of the Official Opposition has to say. I'm also very interested to hear what the

Member for Klwane has to say. I see there hasn't been much participation, but it looks like the member opposite is ready to participate, so I'll look forward to his comments also.

Thank you.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It gives me great pleasure to enter into the debate on this motion brought forward by the Member for Whitehorse West. I'm somewhat surprised that the Member for Klondike is trying to determine the speaking order on this side this afternoon, but nevertheless, I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion. It is an important motion, and sometimes it's difficult to know where you're going unless you take a look and see where you've been and where you've come from. If there's one thing I can say about the debate this afternoon, it has been very interesting. It has been, I think, good to hear that there is support from all members who have spoken so far for the importance of this issue worldwide and across Canada, but in particular to us in Yukon.

It's interesting, as I say, to see where we've been and see where we've come, because the Member for Klondike spoke about how supportive he is of this motion and how important it is. I'm just going to read a few excerpts from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, to show from where we've come. The first is from May 7, 2002. It's the former Member for Klondike who didn't share the opinions of the current member as to how important an issue this was. I quote: "Let's move on to another area — the Kyoto convention and the Yukon's role. Global warming — several things are agreed to, that the temperature on the surface of the earth rose in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and man burned more fossil fuel during that time. "That's about it. It's not really all that clear that the two are linked because most of the warming occurred early in this century. That was well before the surge in man-made gases. If you look at the Canadian Fraser Institute's 2001 study, it concluded that there is no clear evidence of the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> on global climate, either on surface temperature records of the past 100 years or balloon radio sounds over the last 40 years or from satellite experiments over the last 20 years. In fact, NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies now reports that global warming has slowed so much that temperature increases predicted for 2050 won't happen."

The former member went on to say, "Canada appears to be poised to buy into the Kyoto convention. My concern is that there was probably a backroom deal made between the government in Ottawa and the Liberals here in the Yukon to act as a sink to maintain much of the Yukon as a park so we can get carbon credits."

The member went on to say, "Mr. Chair, many, many Yukoners today are concerned about global warming but are probably more concerned about where it is because we are certainly not experiencing it here in the Yukon and we'd like to enjoy a little bit more of this global warming than what we are currently experiencing."

That is the former Member for Klondike for the Yukon Party caucus when in opposition. Certainly, I don't think the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin or the Member for Klondike today would say that we were looking forward to more global warming than we have currently experienced. In fact, there was



a motion put on the Order Paper on May 8, 2002, by that former Member for Klondike, and he gave notice of the following motion:

“THAT it is the opinion of this House that the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol by the Government of Canada could have a profound impact on development activities in the Yukon;

THAT this House recognizes that the Yukon Liberal government has stated that its position on the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol is similar to the position being advanced by the Liberal Government of Canada; and

THAT this House urges the Yukon Liberal government to develop its own position on the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol after first analyzing its socio-economic and environmental impacts on Yukon.”

That was a mere seven and a half years ago. I know that I asked quite a few questions in 2006 and 2007 — certainly 2007 on this issue — and I didn’t get answers from the government as to whether they really supported the Kyoto Protocol. At the time it was being labelled as some federal Liberal/Yukon Liberal agreement that didn’t seem to interest others. I think that shows where we’ve come from.

The important thing is that I think all members do agree today that this issue is not a Yukon Party issue or NDP issue or Liberal issue; it’s a Yukon issue, and that’s progress. I know that Yukon was the last jurisdiction in Canada to develop a climate change action plan. A few years ago, that’s where we were.

Actually, the Liberal caucus, in March of 2007, held a climate change forum. At the time, there hadn’t been a climate change forum held by any of the parties in Yukon. Of course, in opposition our budgets are limited so it was a big undertaking. We brought in a guest speaker, Guy Dauncey, who was an interesting speaker. He was the author of a book called *Stormy Weather*. We had a Yukon panel as well. It included people like John Maissan who was a pioneer when it came to wind power in the Yukon and the possibilities of it and John Streicker, who at the time had been working with the Northern Climate Exchange and Yukon College and who has been attentively listening to this debate all day in the visitors gallery today who had quite a lot of interesting things to tell us about what was coming for all of us if we didn’t address climate change.

It took many years to get all sides of this House onside and I think we can be thankful for that today. There has been much talk in Yukon in recent years about the changes we’ve seen — the beetle kill in southwest Yukon that persisted for so long because our winters were no longer having the extended periods of 40-below weather that would kill off the larvae. We’ve seen that cured. The pine beetle has been seen moving north through British Columbia and can no doubt arrive in Yukon before long if it hasn’t already in southeast Yukon.

We’ve seen the changes in the north. I saw firsthand, when I visited with my colleague, the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, the change in the landscape when Zelma Lake — which was a lake that his family, for time immemorial, as long as they passed on their traditions — had used as a base at different times of the year for raftering and for fishing. The lake drained in a matter of

hours, due to instability in the underlying permafrost. It was a personal tragedy for the entire family of my colleague, as well as the entire community. I don’t know that I’ve ever seen how emotionally something like that can impact on people, as I did when I walked on that dry lake bed and saw the shocked faces, and the hurt and the pain and the fear of what the future might bring on community members from Old Crow that this kind of thing was happening — not just from what we do here in Yukon, but from the effects impacting Yukon of things that are happening in the United States, in China, in Russia — around the world. Those changes don’t respect borders.

Those slash lines we see when we hit the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel between B.C. and Yukon are pretty meaningless when it comes to the impacts of climate change. We have focused a lot in the north on our winter impacts in terms of melting permafrost, in terms of receding glaciers, in terms of polar ice cap shrinking. If you look in the books that we’ve all seen, *An Inconvenient Truth* by Al Gore or *Stormy Weather* or lots of other books, you can see the photographic record of change, but we also see it in the summers as well. We see the figures that major wildfires in North and South America that were occurring at a rate of perhaps two or three a year in North America in the 1950s and 1960s and that moved forward to an average of around 45 a year in the 1990s. That is more than a tenfold increase — closer to a twentyfold increase, Mr. Speaker. These are signs of change that we can’t ignore.

Now, we have tried to put forward some proposals over the last few years. One that we put forward was the idea of improving public transit, including at least a trial period of free public transit in the City of Whitehorse, where public transit has its best opportunity to flourish because of the greater population density. That would require this government — the territorial government — to provide increased funding to the city. The city is interested in pursuing it. It’s something that could impact on every one of us. That was not met with much positive reaction from the members opposite.

My colleague, the Member for Kluane — and the Member for Klondike made reference to him when he was on his feet — brought forward a net metering bill earlier in the life of this Legislative Assembly. We had some filibuster and then debate on this bill was adjourned. Why? Because it came forward from this side of the House. We now hear the Energy, Mines and Resources minister mentioning that net metering is part of the solution.

I guess what I would say is that on issues like this, we need to put aside the partisan, “gotcha”, politics that we’ve experienced in the past. We need to say, “Here is a good idea. Let’s take it and move forward with it.” If it is not ready to be adopted in its present form, then let’s get the resources of government onside to move it forward like the government did with the smoke-free places legislation that the Third Party brought forward. They felt that it wasn’t quite ready, but they made available the Department of Justice and other departments to do the work to bring it forward, and the government brought it forward as government legislation. That is fine. It doesn’t matter whose name the legislation is in as long as we actually get the job done.

I know that there are other members who want to speak, so I'm not going to use my whole 20 minutes. There are other things that I could read into the record, but I think that the important thing is that we actually move forward and actually make the changes so that those shocking pictures, which we've all seen in these various books like the ones I've cited, don't become the reality that our children and our grandchildren have to live with.

The problems that were there when Kyoto first held its famous meeting and the Kyoto Accord was approved by so many governments, including Canada, have only worsened because of the fact that governments — Canada's government, United States' government, governments in China and India — have postponed taking action, because they feared the economic consequences on their own economy, within their own borders.

As I've said, this problem doesn't respect borders. Ironically, what we started out viewing as an environmental problem is ultimately going to become an economic disaster if we don't address it. There is a quote in one of the books I have in front of me, and it says: "The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by skeptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by the obvious realities. We need men who can dream of things that never were." That's President John F. Kennedy. And I would say, "We need men and women ..." just to update that quote.

We need to dream of things that never were, and in doing so, we need to head off the nightmare that could become, and follow the dream to avoid inheriting the nightmare.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** It gives me great pleasure to stand and support this motion. I will probably not take as long as everyone else, and I'll touch base on a few points with regard to this motion as it relates to the Department of Health and Social Services, along with a couple of personal statements.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, I think the Copenhagen conference is intended to provide for a global climate change treaty — a new one, basically — eliminating emissions of greenhouse gases, that will replace the one that was signed in Kyoto. I think that's one of the major issues. I think it's positive to see that around 65 countries have already submitted their names to attend.

It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the three major countries have not confirmed their attendance — that being China, U.S. and India. Mr. Obama has sort of hinted that he might be attending the one in Mexico. Given that the U.S. and China and India are the greatest polluters, shall we say, I think it's important that they should send somebody from their countries to attend; it'll be difficult to get an agreement without representatives from those three countries. Despite that, I think it's important that the Minister of Environment has put through this motion for us to discuss. I believe it's important that we as Yukoners demonstrate, as a subnational government, that it's very important to make our point heard on what we feel the environment does for the Yukon, as well as for Canada and especially in the north. I think the members opposite have touched base — as well as my colleagues on this side — on several

examples. I would like to say that 10 years ago we weren't thinking of the Northwest Passage. Who would have worried 10 years ago about it being hard to get icebreakers halfway through? Now, they're going through all winter long.

So, yes, there is a change. There is a change worldwide, not just in the north, but also in the southeast, where we're having many more hurricanes than we've ever had before in our lifespan. We've had more tsunamis. We've had more natural monsoons in Asia. Many more of those situations are occurring elsewhere throughout the world. So, yes, we are having climate change, and it's affecting everyone in the world; therefore, it's important, I believe, that everyone attends this meeting and gets their points heard, so that we can go forth and, hopefully, make an agreement that allows us to at least curb the process that we're on right now and address many of the issues, so that our grandchildren will not have to try to repair our mistakes. I think it's very important.

The Minister of Environment has been successful in opening the climate change research centre at Yukon College and has also tabled our climate change action plan, both of which have been very important elements in dealing with the environment in the Yukon, and I thank her for that specifically.

I would like to now just go through a couple of issues with regard to climate change in Health and Social Services. We've been actively involved in the Yukon government's action plan. We participated in the committee in order to collaborate with numerous government departments and non-government partners to address climate change in the Yukon Territory. The climate change action plan identifies four key goals: one, to enhance our understanding and awareness of climate change; two, to improve our ability to adapt to climate change; three, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions; and four, to establish the Yukon as a northern leader for climate change research and innovation.

Health and Social Services supports all these initiatives with a focused interest on human health. Health and Social Services monitors health trends to identify and develop a response and provides Yukoners with essential health services that are responsive to the demands and change. Health and Social Services continues to monitor health trends, evaluates our health programs and keeps services responsive to changing priorities and demands, climate change consideration being one of them.

Health and Social Services gave a presentation on climate change and human health in Haines Junction at the Haines Junction climate change workshop, which was called "In our Backyard" in March of 2009.

Our presentation focused on health impacts of climate change in Canada's north. Such things as unpredictability of weather, warming temperatures, food security, water security and permafrost were discussed. Key segments of our population such as seniors, children, individuals of low socioeconomic status and the chronically ill are more vulnerable to health effects of heat, and may have less adaptive capacity to deal with the increased durations and severity of such events. Health and Social Services provides emergency health services,

and keeps current with climate change initiatives in regard to human health.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I think one of my colleagues had a discussion with regard to acid rain. I'm reminded that my wife came home and advised me of a science project that one of her students brought into class, and it was about acid rain. My wife was able to go on the computer with the student and follow the process and demonstrate to the child the effect acid rain has on the earth and on all those that it comes in contact with. It was a great revelation to this young student and even a better one for my wife because now she fully understands what acid rain is all about. I think it was an excellent example of just exactly what the education aspect is for climate change.

With regard to a couple of other issues, I think that we in Health and Social Services are looking at increasing the efficiencies of our buildings — the energy aspects. We are moving forward to the super green standard in many of our new facilities now — new children's receiving home. We have provided the same kind of construction manner for our doctors facilities in Watson Lake and we intend on looking at much the same type of construction for many of our new buildings that will be constructed in the future. We anticipate very much being along the cutting edge when it comes to new construction for the north and we hope to be able to transfer that knowledge to our northern circumpolar countries.

Many of us on this side, as well as members opposite, have indicated many of the things they've done personally, trying to reduce the strain on the actual environment. We've talked about recycling. I think just about everyone here has mentioned that. It has taken me a long time to learn how to recycle but I've actually gotten into the mode in that regard. Turning off our lights, turning down our heat when we're not in the house, turning off our lights when we're not there during the evening — these are all small pieces, but they are important, just like it's important for us to take Yukon's message to Canada to try to get them to put forth their decision to the rest of the world, and to put forth our decision. I think that was also stressed by the members opposite with regard to "the more they get together, the better it's going to be". I think it's important that we do that.

I think the most important issue for us is that we achieve an agreement in Copenhagen that must allow for the immediate implementation of provisions, while also including the commitment to convert the agreement to an internationally legally binding treaty as soon as possible. I think that's the obvious objective.

I hope that our members can go over there and put the effort forth, bring Yukon's concerns to Canada as well as the rest of the world to achieve that process wherever possible.

I thank you very much.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** It gives me pleasure to speak at least briefly on this motion and I certainly support it — and perhaps give a few different perspectives. Previous speakers have referred to it being a global issue and this is absolutely correct; it requires global solutions and an understanding of what that means. I think it was pointed out in previous discus-

sions at the federal level that doing something dramatic in the City of Windsor only to move that activity over to the other side of the river into Detroit has really accomplished very little. We have to be working in harmony with our partners on that.

I also have to perhaps smile a bit with some of the members before who referred to the fact that they couldn't conceive of rain as being a bad thing. I'm suspicious that the people of Duncan and Courtenay might have a different perspective on that after this last weekend.

It is always said that most things have to be done in moderation, but the global warming issue is something that has been there and it's developing.

I personally think that the jury is still out to a degree as to causes. I tend to think that if you go back millennium — and perhaps thousands of years — and you can do that through monitoring patterns, rings of trees and all sorts of different ways — you find that there is a natural cycle. I think — I won't say "logical conclusion" because it is always arguable — can you really say that man has caused the problem? I think not. But can you say that man is contributing greatly to making it worse? Yes, absolutely. The end result is the same thing. We still have to be able to look at this. I think watching the debate over the past few years, without really putting it in those terms, a lot of people have started to agree to that sort of viewpoint.

I was rather pleased when the documents came out of our Department of Environment, after careful thought and consideration on the climate change action plan, with specific areas — enhanced knowledge and understanding of climate change; absolutely. We are not going to get that from reading novels. We are going to get that from establishing a centre of excellence for research and being able to really develop that. Traditional knowledge certainly gives you perhaps hundreds of years of overview on that and it has to be taken seriously, but the science, as well, should be looked at over thousands of years as it is a part of that puzzle.

The second goal that is stated is to adapt to climate change. I think this has been something that we have felt on this side for a long time — that given a small jurisdiction of Yukon, are there direct things that we can do that will have world impacts? That is perhaps limited. Does that mean that we shouldn't be participating with the rest of the world and everything else? Yes, absolutely — absolutely, but we would have to be able to adapt to that climate change.

I remember going to a conference back around 2002 in Inuvik. One of the elders got up and was speaking first of all about his hunt camp and it took a few minutes to realize his hunt camp was actually a former whaling camp. He talked about the fact that things were growing there that never grew before and he referred to two trees. Someone in the audience pointed out that two spruce trees were not going to grow in that area. He calmly pulled out a photograph of a little cabin with two 10-foot spruce trees at the front door. They were growing just fine. Things are happening that we are not aware of.

There was also one of the botanists from the Yukon government who pulled out a series of photographs taken from the same location each year and the types of cover and the types of vegetation were extremely different. Every year they changed,

so we have to adapt to that change. We have to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and again, in a small jurisdiction, we're perhaps bit players in that, but we still have to be players. We still have to come to the table and do that. It was rather interesting at a conference this past summer in Whitehorse involving Yukon and Alaskan students. I had the great fun of helping set the thing up and work at. We arranged for recycling bins and everything else through Raven. The Alaskans were horrified. Some of them had a good idea what we were doing, but they had never seen recycling on that level. By the end of the weekend, they were right into it and it's that education process that has to be a part of it.

Water resources have been mentioned in changing lakes and changing permafrost. I know it's always enjoyable — in a strange sort of way — to have some of our tourists refer to bad sections of road and why don't we just do something about it. They can't quite conceive of the fact that we do a lot about it every year but the permafrost puts it right back where it was. It's a hard force to argue with, something that the contractors and U.S. army and Canadian army found when they put in the Alaska Highway — once scraping off the protective layers of that permafrost. There are probably still trucks buried under some parts of that highway. It created another complete problem.

We have to be able to understand and to adapt to that. We have to put this whole thing in perspective, and again lead Yukon and — I would suggest — be at the forefront in Canada to see these differences and these changes. I think people forget that when you see statistics about the amount of change — for instance, according to an intergovernmental panel on climate change, the overall temperature of the globe has risen 0.74 degrees Celsius over the past century. That doesn't really seem like a heck of a lot, but that's average over the globe. When you start looking toward the poles, and realize that it's many times that, we've got a problem.

Environment Canada reports that Canada's average temperature has risen one degree between 1950 and 2000. Again, that's more dramatic because of our location in the north.

The action plan is based on a common understanding that climate change is happening — and I think we have to agree that it is. We may argue what caused it, but it's still happening — and that human behaviour is a contributor. Again, we can argue over whether it caused it, but it's certainly a contributor and we have to coordinate that response.

Some of the things that we've hit in our climate here — the 2004 fire season, for instance, is the largest on record and doubled the previous record — things that are blown completely out of proportion that we never expected.

We had extensive flooding in 2007 in the Southern Lakes region. The problems we encountered this last year in other parts of Yukon were, I think, perhaps due to an influence of global warming, but other factors. But does that mean we've solved the problem? God no, it's going to be a continual problem that's going to come back.

We did have flooding in the 2008 season. That was a big part of it. I knew that we were sort of in a bit of trouble when the Member for Klondike came in one day and said that he

knew he was in trouble when a traffic cone floated past him on the Klondike Highway. The water was that deep that it was actually a river coming through there.

So as we move along through the establishment of the action plan and the establishment of beginning to get a concept of what we're going to do and how we're going to do it, at the same time, of course, we have to assess that infrastructure risk. How is that going to affect roads? How is it going to affect bridges? All of this has to be part of that. And, again, permafrost is a huge part of what we see here and of what we're going to have.

So with those few comments, I won't belabour the point. I think this is a good thing to get involved with Canada, to show Canada that we're at the table, to show that the effects are first seen in the north and confirm to everyone that we in fact are seeing them.

Another group that has been much involved in this sort of thing — and I do have to give them credit — is the Northern Forum. The Northern Forum is a subnational organization, not unlike PNWER — the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. But the Northern Forum is a number of Arctic or sub-Arctic regions and there are working groups within that. One of the biggest contributions that Yukon has been able to make is to get our Department of Environment and our hydrologists involved in flood controls, much of which I would submit is due to global warming.

I am pleased to say that I was informed that, since Yukon and our Department of Environment officials got involved with the Northern Forum — and got involved with those projects within the jurisdictional area of the Northern Forum — there has not been a single death recorded due to climate-induced flooding. So again, we have to be able to take the lead on this.

With that, I certainly will support it.

**Speaker:** If the member speaks, she will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'd like to just conclude my remarks by extending my thanks to all members of the Legislature for their support. Listening over the course of the debate here today, there has been a lot of discussion in reference to Kyoto and where we are today and how far we have come or how far we haven't come. One thing that I just wanted to make reference to is that one of the key differences between Kyoto and Copenhagen — and this has been referenced in a number of forums that I have been to over the course of the last year and a half — is the very role of subnational governments and the role of indigenous populations, the role of youth, in helping shape the world's response to climate change.

I wasn't specifically directly involved in Kyoto back in 1997 when it was adopted, but I do know from listening to other world leaders who were, at that time there wasn't any reference to that inclusion of the role of others. Over the last year, I have had the opportunity to participate in a number of different forums that have showcased subnational governments, their experience and the expertise that they bring.

What I have seen is an amazing and interesting transformation. In fact, it was brought to my attention in California this past summer that there are more than several organizations that comprise hundreds of subnational governments. When we talk about subnational governments, we talk everything from territories to the provinces to the states to regions to even cities. In fact, I even learned about a new subnational regional association made up of capital cities, if I am not mistaken.

Over and over again, what I have heard at these forums is that our national governments — today is all about encouraging our national governments to do the right things and to recognize what this means for us here and to recognize what that means for people all over the world. It is very much a human rights issue.

When I was also in California there were some missions made by Oxfam, for example — Oxfam International. The reference was that women and children in developing countries are going to be, by far, the worse hit of any other individuals in the world. That is because of the drought that we're seeing, and the droughts that we will continue to see, and the famine. Because women and children happen to be the number one — perhaps not landowner, but they're the ones who drive the agriculture industry, and they're the ones who are working in the fields and producing the food. With the changes we're seeing, increasingly, and that have already struck, we're seeing more and more hard-hit individuals such as this.

That is but one example of how this is all very much about sustaining our environment, but sustaining human life as we know it. It's by hearing and having that opportunity to be able to hear directly from others about their experiences because clearly, from what we've heard today, we have our own personal stories of what was like here 40 years ago. I do, and I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has had his personal stories. We all have our stories, but it really does hit home when we hear circumstances such as those in developing countries that are especially being hard hit and, of course, our northern regions that are warming two and three times the average temperature rise that we're experiencing everywhere else.

So what I have heard is that, among the subnational governments and associations, again, when it comes down to it, our national governments will do what they will or will not do. But, at the end of the day, 50 and up to 85 percent of those actions required to meet those specific levels that have been put forward by the United Nations will, in fact, be implemented here at home by our respective governments.

Whenever I hear about the cost of acting being so expensive, well, you know, you're right. It's expensive to do just about anything these days.

The cost of not acting is tenfold or a hundredfold perhaps. We just see that. If we don't act now and prepare for the changes coming our way — whether it is flooding or forest fires or beetle kill — we are really going to be having to come up with some pretty atrocious amounts of dollars. I always try to challenge individuals that the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of acting.

What I have also heard today is that government cannot do this alone. We cannot effect climate change and it all comes

down to our individual actions. There was a poll conducted last month by the Pew Research Centre for the people in the press. This always strikes me — it found that only 36 percent of Americans believe that climate change is happening and that it is primarily caused by humans, which is a drop of 11 percent from last year. Furthermore, some market research was also provided from London, UK, and it showed that 52 percent of people don't believe that climate change will affect them and 18 percent don't believe it will affect their children — that's another difference.

These figures do alarm me, but what heartens me is when I was able to participate with 350 — probably 400 individuals plus — who hugged this Legislature, believe it or not — because I don't think it's a hugging kind of institution — no offence, Mr. Speaker. I do say that it does hearten me because, on a per capita basis, Yukoners really show their stuff. They really came out and they showed their strength in numbers. Just having that number of people come together to take action in our national action on climate change speaks volumes about the influence that we have here at home and also the power that we have in effecting change.

I agree — attitudes have changed, even in the last 10 years. Thank God they have changed. You know, when I look at Kyoto, there were governments who signed on and unfortunately didn't meet those targets. In fact, Canada, for one, fell behind 30 percent below the target, but, you know, now is not the time to be pointing fingers. Now is the time to be coming together and working with one another.

I'm very pleased that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Mount Lorne have accepted my invitation to go to Copenhagen next month to take part in these discussions and to also learn and be able to share our experiences here and what that means — but also to continue to learn. There are some amazing things going on in other parts of the world in terms of technological advances. If we are to meet a binding target, we need technology to effect change, and we also need dollars to help developing countries like India and Brazil to effect that change as well. That is all part and parcel of Copenhagen — the adaptation and the financial mechanisms and also the very presence of the subnational governments and their influence. I think that is the very difference between Kyoto and Copenhagen, and for those reasons I feel very optimistic that we will be able to reach something. It may only be a political accord, a framework. I hope it's something more, but I think we have come a long way.

I hope it's something more, but I think we have come a long way, and I think we've got a lot longer to go. Again, I just want to thank everyone for their support and for taking the time to address this very important issue here today. Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Agree.

**Mr. Edzerza:** Agree.

**Mr. Nordick:** Agree.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Agree.

**Mr. McRobb:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Agree.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

*Motion No. 890 agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, 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 (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### Bill No. 17 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Department of Community Services.

#### Department of Community Services — *continued*

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Mr. Chair, before addressing any further questions from the members opposite on the Department of Community Services supplementary budget, I want to talk a bit about our work to improve emergency response in Yukon. More specifically, Mr. Chair, we have just announced a new integrated emergency response facility that will be built at the top of Two Mile Hill that will house Whitehorse's new primary emergency medical service ambulance station.

This new facility will help reduce EMS's response time to residents of Whitehorse and surrounding areas. Design work will begin this year. This helps meet our commitment to provide Yukon's vital emergency responders with the equipment they need to serve Whitehorse and its surrounding area.

I also want to take a few minutes to elaborate on some of my responses during the general debate last Thursday afternoon. I'll start by providing additional information regarding the sports and recreation branch's fund, programs and activities. With regard to the Yukon Recreation Advisory Council, or YRAC, grant recipients, I am pleased to confirm that 34 groups received funding this year.

Mr. Chair, YRAC funding is made possible by a revenue-shared agreement between the Yukon Lottery Commission and the Government of Yukon and supports healthy living in sports and recreational programs across the Yukon Territory.

There are 27 Yukon sports governing bodies receiving a total of \$515,250 as follows: Alpine Ski and Snowboard Association of Yukon received \$15,050; Athletics Yukon, \$1,500; Basketball Yukon, \$30,000; Biathlon Yukon, \$9,000; Cross Country Yukon, \$89,500; Equine, \$3,000; Figure Skating, \$4,000; Freestyle Skiing, \$5,000; Judo Yukon, \$7,000; Snowboard Yukon Association, \$3,000; Softball Yukon, \$19,000; Squash Yukon, \$14,600; Swim Yukon, \$39,500; Synchro Yukon Association, \$4,000; Table Tennis, \$5,200; Tennis Yukon Association, \$4,500; Volleyball Yukon, \$30,000; Yukon Amateur Hockey Association, \$68,500; Yukon Amateur Speed Skating Association, \$11,500; Yukon Badminton Association, \$6,100; Yukon Curling Association, \$13,500; Yukon Cycling Association, \$4,300; Yukon Golf Association, \$4,000; Yukon Gymnastics Association, \$26,500; Yukon Orienteering Association, \$5,500; Yukon Shooting Federation, \$3,000; and Yukon Soccer Association, \$88,500.

In addition, Mr. Chair, to the sports governing body, seven Yukon special recreation groups are receiving a total of \$192,000. These groups are as follows: the ElderActive Recreation Association, \$10,000; Girl Guides — Yukon Council, \$14,000; Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon, \$61,000; Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, \$61,000; Yukon Aboriginal Sports Circle, \$19,000; Yukon Scout Council, \$9,000; and Yukon Special Olympics, \$18,000.

I also want to mention that as a part of YRAC funding, there is the Yukon high-performance sports grants that provide \$70,000 to 20 athletes and one official. Yukon's Sport for Life is another important funding program. In 2009-10, 24 sports governing bodies will share \$329,000 in funding, \$50,000 have been given to Elite Athletes, and \$20,000 will help fund in-territory travel to allow participants to try out for Yukon representative teams and Yukon championships. This totals \$419,000 of support to Yukon sports.

The community recreation advisory grant provides unincorporated communities opportunities to promote and deliver recreational activities. In the year 2009-10, Beaver Creek received \$33,190; Burwash Landing received \$7,409; Carcross received \$54,790; Destruction Bay received \$7,160; Keno City received \$3,200; Marsh Lake received \$39,600; Mount Lorne received \$39,390; Old Crow received \$46,190; Pelly Crossing received \$51,480; Ross River received \$81,570; Tagish received \$35,260; and Upper Liard received \$18,690, for a total of \$417,929 in funding.

This support facilitates and maintains costs — swimming pool operating costs, salaries, and recreation facilities in our Yukon communities.

With regard to the leadership summit, it is \$10,000, which is the contribution the sports and recreation branch makes to the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon to enable them to offer an annual recreation conference. This year, they have chosen to partner with the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle on a leadership summit.

Lastly, our contribution to the 2010 Arctic Winter Games consists of the financial support toward sending a Yukon team to the games. We contract with Sports Yukon to provide administration support, organization and leadership of the team. The total funding is \$355,000. This is comprised of \$130,000 toward administration and \$225,000 for transportation to and from Grande Prairie. Together, this funding is a major investment on the part of this government to support sports and recreation in Yukon and help our athletes to perform to the best of their ability.

Last week, there was also a discussion about gas-tax funded water-related projects. I am pleased to confirm the following water-improvement projects have been approved: the Village of Carmacks received \$26,798; the Town of the City of Dawson received \$1,304,169; the Town of Faro received \$40,851.74; the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun received \$535,000; Kluane First Nation received \$36,376; Liard First Nation received \$87,000; Selkirk First Nation received \$233,820; the Village of Teslin received \$77,417; and the City of Whitehorse received \$555,000.

These projects can be completed at any time during the life of the agreement and are at various stages of progress. These important projects will greatly improve access to safe drinking water in Yukon. With that, I —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Also, another thing was brought up. Enumeration in the City of Whitehorse: last Thursday we had an extensive conversation about that. Section 61 of the *Municipal Act* provides that the council may, by bylaw, provide for a system of enumeration of persons entitled to vote at an election. Section 228 provides that council may take a census of the municipality. A bylaw is not required to carry out the census. There is nothing in the *Municipal Act* that suggests enumeration and census can't be done at the same time. The city carried them out together as a cost-saving measure, as door-to-door data collection is an expensive process. The census data was used for infrastructure and transportation planning purposes.

Enumerators were instructed to leave an information sheet about the census data with each household along with a copy of the census record. Enumeration questions were to be asked by one of the pair of enumerators and census questions were to be asked by the other of the pair — in other words, there were two individuals.

The Privacy Commissioner reviewed bylaw 2009-15 and recommended the above disclosure of how the information would be used. Enumeration information is to be provided to individuals and census questions were part of the bylaw 2009-15. The option for individuals not to be enumerated or answer census questions is not part of the information required under the bylaw. Individuals may refuse to be enumerated during this process, then to be enumerated on polling day by swearing an oath and requesting that their information be withheld from the voters list to protect their personal privacy.

At any time prior to the publication of the preliminary list of electors, an elector may request that their name and address not be published. Persons who are eligible to vote and want to remain confidential can vote by special ballot through the re-

turning officer. The *Municipal Act* allows municipalities flexibility to establish a bylaw to implement their own method of enumeration and governance during elections

There are only three municipalities that have voters lists — Whitehorse, Mayo and Watson Lake. In 2003 and the fall of 2008, there were amendments to the *Municipal Act* allowing a public review process during the Yukon and Association of Yukon Communities as required by part 1, section 12(1) — issues such as privacy are tracked by Yukon government for consideration during future reviews of the *Municipal Act*.

I hope, Mr. Chair, that that would answer some of the questions. On my presentation Thursday when I opened the discussions on the department — when I closed the discussion we were talking about water projects — Community Services is improving water quality and supply through planned investment in potable water supplies and systems. Five communities will receive improved public water treatment systems with funding through the Building Canada fund. The following communities will benefit: Ross River, Haines Junction, Teslin, Carcross and Marsh Lake.

Community Services is also working with governments and community partners to train and certify water operators, improve physical infrastructure and pilot-test treatment processes to improve water quality. We are requesting an additional \$412,000 to complete this northern strategy project.

We are also asking for \$118,000 for additional water projects, including the installation of equipment for the Old Crow water well. The rural domestic water well program helps ensure that Yukoners have access to safe drinking water on their own personal property. To date, 82 projects have been completed and 15 well projects are in progress. This year, the average cost per well is just under \$22,000.

Waste water — construction of the Carmacks waste-water treatment system continues in this supplementary budget. We are requesting \$3.993 million for this project. Community Services is investing in other waste-water infrastructure projects, including upgrades and repairs in Burwash Landing, Carcross, and Destruction Bay.

In this supplementary budget, we are requesting \$29,000 to improve the sludge dry beds at Carcross sewage treatment facility and \$152,000 for the Selkirk waste-water disposal facility project, which is 50 percent recoverable from Canada.

The \$15-million Hamilton Boulevard extension was opened in August by Yukon and partners under the MRIF program, Canada and the City of Whitehorse. The new roadway provides a safe alternative access for residents and, of course, emergency responders. We are requesting in this supplementary budget an additional \$3.247 million to take the project to completion. The northern strategy is funding engineering work in Old Crow for road and drainage upgrades — an additional \$144,000 is required to complete the work on this project. Mr. Chair, as I see the time, I would report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Lang that Committee of the Whole report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*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**

**Mr. Nordick:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress.

**Speaker:** You have heard the report of the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.*