

**Yukon Legislative Assembly****Whitehorse, Yukon****Monday, November 19, 2012 — 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 now proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

**TRIBUTES****In remembrance of Sue Thompson**

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I'd like to rise and pay tribute to a fantastic lady, a former employee of Environment Yukon, and a good friend to a number of staff in the department, as well as throughout the entire government — that is Sue Thompson.

Sue was born in Calgary, Alberta, the daughter of Murray and Joan Thompson.

Growing up, Susan was a natural athlete, participating in all kinds of outdoor activities and sports, like baseball, ice hockey and Triwood's first girls soccer team. This continued throughout her life and grew to include many accomplishments, such as hiking, fishing, boating, biking, swimming and scuba diving. Sue graduated from William Aberheart High School in Calgary, Alberta, in 1978. In 1982, after completing college at Vermilion, Susan moved to Whitehorse, Yukon, where she began a 20-year career as a fisheries technician and biologist for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Department of Environment for YTG.

In 1984, Susan travelled to Kenya as a volunteer with Canadian Crossroads International. It was a journey that quite literally changed her life, a journey that formed the foundation for her work and the friendships that drew her back to Kenya for the next 28 years. While in Kenya in 2003, Susan was approached by a group of rural fish farmers for advice. Over the next eight years, Susan's passion for fish and community development cumulated in Fish4Kenya, a project she developed to assist and train these fish farmers. During her time in Kenya, Susan also purchased 15 sewing machines and opened a tailoring school, which has helped more than 150 students. She started a lunch program at a local school and has supported many students through high school. In 2010, Susan was awarded a Rotary Peace Fellowship Scholarship, the only Canadian selected that year, to study peace and conflict resolution at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. She hoped to incorporate these teachings into her work in Kenya.

Susan loved all animals, but especially her two chocolate labs, named Nitschka and Duffle, who enjoyed the best of situations living with Susan. They were devoted and constant companions throughout her Yukon years.

In October of 2011, Susan was diagnosed with breast cancer and began her brave battle. During the final month in Whitehorse hospital, Susan's courage and dignity was an

inspiration to all. On any given day, she would have a crowd of visitors, surrounded by great love and true friendships.

Susan was an eternal optimist and a very gifted person who lived a rich and varied life and embraced new experiences with great energy. Susan will be remembered for her generosity, her love of sweatpants and ball caps, her smile, her optimism and her belief that we all have the ability and responsibility to make a positive difference in this world no matter the circumstances.

Susan will be profoundly missed by her loving family and many friends. Among those, Mr. Speaker, is my mother, who played on her fastball team and hockey team, and that's how I, as a child, had the chance to meet Susan. I would like members to join me in paying tribute to Susan Thompson.

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to read a tribute to Sue Thompson. I apologize if there is some repetition in it, but she was deserving.

I rise today on behalf of the members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to a long-time Yukoner and a friend, Sue Thompson.

Sue was born in Calgary, Alberta to Joan and Murray Thompson and completed her education and training there. In 1982, Sue moved to the Yukon to begin her long career as a fisheries technician and biologist, both for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Department of Environment. Through her work, she travelled all over the Yukon, spending time on our many lakes and rivers all over this beautiful territory. She counted and identified the many species of fish, caught and tagged fish, and prepared reports, which were the least favourite part of her work. She loved her career and she thrived on it and the people she met along the way.

Sue had another love, and that was her love for Africa and, in particular, the people of Kakamega, Kenya. To them, she was known as "Momma Susan." This title was about their respect and love for her. Sue first travelled to Kenya in 1984 as a volunteer with Canadian Crossroads International. It was a life-changing journey for Sue and she would return to Africa over and over.

Sue had a special relationship with the people and community of Kakamega. It was there that Sue had the biggest impact on people's lives. Sue's passion for fish and for community building resulted in the project called "Fish4Kenya". Through this program, Sue worked with over 100 local farmers to build and set up economically viable fish farms. These farms provided farmers and their families not only with income, but nutritious food. Sue worked hard side by side with these farmers to build the fish farms and teach other skills like bookkeeping.

She didn't stop there. She purchased sewing machines and opened a tailoring school that helped students learn new skills. And she didn't stop there. She started the lunch program, and personally, through her own finances, supported many students through high school. She also worked with the community to procure bicycles, the most common mode of travel in rural Kenya. Sue rolled up her sleeves and worked alongside the people — her friends — to build a strong community.

Sue leaves behind a community of family, friends, and coworkers all touched by her love, her passions, and her infectious smile. No one could come to know Sue and not be inspired and drawn in by her vision of what could be done. Many of us will look at a situation and think, “What could I possibly do?” Never Sue. She was the eternal optimist who would look hard and work for solutions. She believed we all had that ability and, more importantly, the responsibility to make a positive difference in this world. It’s the challenge she leaves all of us.

Sue died on October 25, 2012, of breast cancer. She leaves behind her mother and father, Joan and Murray, her brother Richard and sister Cheryl and other family members. She leaves behind her friends across Yukon and Canada, and she leaves behind the community of Kakamega, Kenya, to mourn her passing, but celebrate her life and many accomplishments.

Sue’s favourite quotes: “Life is a journey.” and “Enjoy the ride.”

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Stick:** I’d like at this moment just to introduce Bob Van Dijken, who was a very close friend of Sue’s.

## In recognition of Yukon Geoscience Forum and Geoscience Week

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I rise today to pay tribute to Yukon Geoscience Forum and Geoscience Week. The Yukon Geoscience Forum is currently celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. From November 18 to 21 at the Geoscience Forum, miners, geologists, entrepreneurs and the Yukon public will come together to showcase the latest science, geological discoveries and industry developments. It’s a time to celebrate the accomplishments of Yukon’s mineral industry and celebrate its role in a strong, diversified economy and to look ahead at the challenges and successes anticipated, both in the short term and the long term.

The Geoscience Forum is an important event because the industry thrives on having a dependable, regulatory environment, a promising resource base, and an opportunity to share information and make connections. The Yukon Chamber of Mines does an excellent job of organizing the forum, and this year I understand that the number of delegates is at an all-time high.

The Yukon government and staff play an important and integral part of the forum. Government geologists are delivering talks, displaying posters of their latest research and, along with regulators, are participating in conversations with the public and industry members. Yukon’s opportunity is evident in the fact that the Yukon’s mineral industry and the economy have seen considerable growth in recent years and been an important part of the Yukon’s economic prosperity.

If members and those listening look around the world they can see very clearly that all 17 countries within the EU zone are now in recession. We have a situation where countries such as Greece are on the verge of economic collapse. In the midst of this is the success that Canada has relative to the rest of the world, and that the Yukon has relative to the rest of Canada,

that is in no small part due to the natural resource opportunity within Canada and within the Yukon.

For the previous two years, the Yukon has experienced record-breaking numbers for claim staking and mineral exploration.

This year has seen the industry concentrate on further exploration of their properties, and we are seeing the industry mature and settle in for the long term. The Yukon government is committed to improving the investment climate in Yukon by continuing to provide regulatory clarity and a streamlined regulatory regime, as well as identifying areas where the various elements of the process can be made to work more effectively.

Yukon government provides baseline information on Yukon’s geology and mineral potential to support exploration efforts and land and resource management decisions. We support mineral industry associations, both the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners Association with assistance and work on joint initiatives to increase public awareness of the benefits of the industry and the important role it plays as a part of the Yukon’s economy.

Yukon government has also made significant investments in infrastructure development which facilitate the growth of the economy as a whole and the mining sector as a specific part of it. All of these government initiatives are discussed at the Yukon Geoscience Forum. The knowledge sharing that occurs over these four days assists us collectively in moving the industry forward in a sustainable and knowledge-based manner. Attendance and participation at the Geoscience Forum has grown significantly from its roots in the early 1970s, but the purpose has always been the same: to ensure that Yukon remains a leading jurisdiction not only in Canada, but in the world, for having a sustainable long-term industry and leading-edge research and an industry that provides significant economic benefits to all Yukon citizens.

Notably, Yukon is the only First World jurisdiction to permit three major mines in the last five years, and there are others that are in the permitting process — a sign of future economic opportunity — including Victoria Gold and the Mactung property, as well as exploration projects that are underway.

So, Mr. Speaker, here’s to another 40 years and beyond and I am pleased to pay tribute to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yukon’s Geoscience Forum.

*Applause*

**Mr. Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to the annual Geoscience Forum currently being held at the convention centre.

It is indeed a showcase of achievements in our thriving minerals economy, from the short courses and workshops to the exhibitors and speakers. I was fortunate to attend the Yukon mining summit and the Yukon placer forum on the weekend, both of which I found very interesting and informative. I must applaud the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance for the quality of presentations and the creative efforts to meet some of the challenges facing our industry.

As well, at the Yukon placer miner forum, I must applaud the Yukon Geological Survey for the work they did in setting that up.

On Saturday, at the Yukon mining summit, I was reminded that time is critical and we must begin now to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Leadership from First Nations, industry and government is crucial. The sharing of ideas and the discussion of possibilities on Saturday left everyone with new purpose and interest in working together as we go forward to meet these challenges.

I was also fortunate to attend many of the presentations at the Yukon placer forum. It is of great benefit to this industry and members of this industry to be updated on accomplishments by various sectors in the mining field. Excellent work has been done in preparing working data and mapping by the Yukon Geological Survey. I particularly enjoyed the presentation on the placer gold potential map and the discussion around it. This should prove to be a valuable tool for future exploration and claims.

There were presentations on innovations in the placer industry. I was impressed by Randy Clarkson's presentation on ways to improve sluicing and I commend him for the work done in sharing this information through CIDA with Third World countries.

I was particularly taken by Ray Brosseuk's emerging business and the development of the gold machine. Ray is a placer miner who has worked for many years in B.C. and currently has an operation on Mayo Lake. He has designed an efficient way of separating gold and other precious metals from placer gravels. It has an over 92-percent recovery rate and lower water consumption than traditional systems. It is portable, easy to set up, and simple to operate. These elements mean that there are overall operating costs and increases in gold recovery, which makes for more profits for the miner. I'd like to congratulate Ray for designing this ingenious invention and wish him the best as he enriches all placer miners in the future. He certainly created a lot of excitement on Saturday.

In the placer mining industry, I've been very fortunate to work with and alongside many placer miners and with members of the quartz mining industry. I have met them in Mayo, in Dawson and Keno; I've taught their children in our schools; I've worked with them on school councils and coached with them. I salute their contributions to our communities. I've met them in local welding shops, tire shops and mechanic shops. I know the many ways the mining industry contributes to our economy.

The forum is an opportunity for the quartz and placer industries to come together to celebrate and share their accomplishments with all Yukoners.

This year at the trade show, I noticed many educational booths and presentations designed especially for children. Thank you to the Yukon Geological Survey staff for including their professional staff in the presentations. The hands-on, interactive booths perked the interest of many of the younger generation. It was also great to see the booths catering to jobs and opportunities for women to participate in the industry.

The Geoscience Forum is an important venue to communicate new ideas and to display the success of our mining industry. It is an opportunity for all Yukoners to come together to learn, share and celebrate the many contributions of the mining industry. It continues until Wednesday, and I encourage everyone to drop by and take advantage of the work on display and walk through the trade show.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the map and core display, which is not at the regular venue, but at the Westmark Whitehorse, and it is indeed something to behold. Make sure everyone gets an opportunity to get over there at some point in the next three days.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Geoscience Forum and trade show.

Mining has come a long way from the Klondike Gold Rush. Mining has been the lifeblood of Yukon for over 100 years and it's still going strong. Local companies have spearheaded the exploration boom, which is considered to be the largest geochemistry experiment in North American history, mostly due to local crews, such as the Ground Truth crew in Klondike. After exploration, these prospectors have reached out to junior companies to use their expertise on the ground in different capacities — new technologies, like GPS and mapping software, for example. Using these new, modern techniques, mining and exploration have continued to develop and adapt.

Today we are in a new gold rush. The Yukon is the 10<sup>th</sup> most active jurisdiction in mineral exploration and development in the world. In 2011, exploration expenditures in the territory surpassed \$300 million, and mineral production is estimated to reach over \$485 million. Today, with geoscience techniques available, mining has become more efficient. The Yukon Geoscience Forum and trade show is a great time for the mining industry to gather and showcase their developments in mining and exploration and to come forward with their counterparts and companies to share knowledge and new techniques. It is also time for the industry to come forward and to talk about the concerns from an investment perspective. For mining companies to continue to invest in the Yukon, we must be able to offer regulatory certainty, road accessibility and sufficient power. We must also offer skilled labour within the territory, so Yukon benefits from job creation in the mining industry.

I would like to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for responsible mining and exploration. I would also like to congratulate the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance for the first summit, and also the Yukon Chamber of Mines for all their hard work and commitment. I hope to see my colleagues join me and the mining community at the Yukon Women in Mining reception at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre tonight, and also at the Victoria Gold open house on Strickland Street this afternoon. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are there any introductions of visitors?  
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I have for tabling the Yukon Development Corporation 2011 Annual Report and the Yukon Energy Corporation 2011 Annual Report documents that are available on-line as well.

**Ms. White:** I have for tabling a letter from MP Marie-Claude Morin to the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation. I also have for tabling federal private member's bill C-400, titled *An Act to Ensure Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing for Canadians*.

**Speaker:** Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the other two territories to support the creation of annual awards that recognize the excellence and achievement of northern businesses, entrepreneurs, and First Nation-owned companies across the spectrum of industry and commerce.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release all state of critical infrastructure readiness plans and community emergency plans in order to:

(1) identify gaps in our emergency preparedness capabilities;

(2) increase critical infrastructure resiliency; and

(3) engage the public and increase public awareness about what to do in the event of an emergency.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the interim electrical rebate beyond March 31, 2013 in order to shield Yukoners from further increases to their power bills.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

This brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: First Nations/government relations

**Ms. Hanson:** The New Democratic Party is not alone in questioning the Premier's pursuit of conflict with First Nations over oil and gas development. In a recent newspaper article, a lawyer and former negotiator in the devolution of oil and gas resources said making First Nation governments mad isn't going to improve anyone's chances of getting things done.

We heard much the same from participants in this past weekend's mining summit. Land use conflict leads to economic uncertainty that can drive investment from the territory. So far the Yukon Party hasn't had a good answer. It's time for the Premier to stop ignoring the question and take responsibility for his government's actions here and now.

Will the Premier tell this House how his government's growing conflict with Yukon First Nations over the territory's *Oil and Gas Act* is in the best interests of Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** This government continues to work with all First Nations at many levels, in collaboration on many different issues that affect all departments of the government. Just recently we had the Minister of Education talking about a tripartite action plan between Yukon First Nations, Yukon government and the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we have had the Minister of Health and Social Services sign a new agreement with Kwanlin Dun First Nation in support of child services. Of course, it wasn't very long ago we announced the new resource revenue sharing with First Nations, and we look forward to a formal signing agreement going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we do Yukon Forum. Yukon Forum has been reintroduced. We had one, and we are looking forward to the next one. It's an opportunity to get together with Yukon First Nations to look at areas where we can work together and continue to build that relationship and work on areas of mutual interest.

We support intergovernmental forums. We have intergovernmental accords with some of the self-governing First Nations. We're working with First Nations on land-based treatment. We are working with First Nations in managing cumulative effects. We have supported Yukon First Nations on their financial transfer agreements. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with Yukon First Nations.

**Speaker:** Order please. The Premier's time has elapsed.

**Ms. Hanson:** Perhaps the Premier misheard the question. He didn't answer it. The fact is that this Yukon Party government, here and now, is creating conflict with respect to the *Oil and Gas Act*, which will lead to economic uncertainty, and that has spinoff effects. Ask the mining investment advisors, who were here for the mining summit; ask the mining company looking to attract capital.

The biggest threat to investment in the territory is uncertainty, and the Yukon Party seems dead set on taking us down that path. Will the Premier stop making excuses and giving the litany of all these wonderful things he's telling us he's doing, and actually do something and direct his ministers to change course on this conflict with First Nations before he rams Yukon into the looming wall?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As I've said in this House before, we believe that Yukon resources belong to all Yukoners. We have been working with the Liard First Nation toward an agreement on the Liard Basin for over 10 years. We have spent almost \$2 million and a decade of trying to work on agreement. We will continue to work with Liard First Nation, with the Kaska, in terms of an economic agreement. But it is very im-

portant to this government that we do treat all First Nations equally. Certainly, the self-governing First Nations have received a considerable amount from gas royalties in the Kotaneelee area already — to date, in excess of \$10 million directly to self-governing First Nations.

We will continue to do our diligence in terms of consultation and accommodation, not only to meet our obligations but in fact surpass our obligations.

**Ms. Hanson:** We've heard from First Nations repeatedly that trying to divide and conquer is not going to work, and the fact of the matter is that the Yukon Party's actions here and now are leading the territory down a slippery slope to conflict, to land use uncertainty.

This weekend I had the opportunity to hear a respected investment fund manager talk about the factors that investors consider when deciding where to invest and, despite the Yukon Party's myopic view, the reality is that capital is mobile. Government does have a role to play in ensuring a sound environment to attract and maintain the investment necessary to build a healthy resource development sector. The New Democratic Party understands this.

This past week voices from outside Yukon have counselled negotiation, along with finding creative solutions. Yukoners expect and deserve this type of responsible leadership from their government. Will the Premier set the excuses aside and stop this conflict with First Nations that every investor and miner knows threatens the future of the territory?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** What the Leader of the NDP knows very well, but chooses not to reflect accurately, is the fact that this government has done more than any previous government in working with First Nations on a variety of projects, on financial agreements, on providing funding to First Nations beyond our obligations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which includes providing the Liard First Nation with millions of dollars to resource their participations in discussions on oil and gas and other matters within their traditional territory.

That includes providing to the Faro mine remediation project over \$7 million to affected Yukon First Nations directly with an additional \$2 million in subcontracts provided. That includes the work that we're currently doing with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in north Yukon on a joint decision document for the Northern Cross oil and gas application.

What I would be very interested to hear from the member when she talks about this weekend is whether she told the mining companies the NDP's vision for mining: end free-entry staking, hike the royalties, and shut down mines, including Alexco and Capstone. Did she tell them that?

#### **Question re: Mining industry data**

**Mr. Tredger:** At this weekend's mining summit, participants repeatedly said that there's a lack of information on the costs, benefits, and other economic impacts of mining in the Yukon. Investors in mining companies want this information to make informed decisions for their capital and their projects. Yukoners want this information to engage in an informed discussion on the role of this industry and our economy and our

society. One would expect the government to also want good information to help make good public policy decisions.

Last year, we asked the Yukon Party to look at Alaska's mining data report and consider the same for the Yukon. We're still waiting for an answer. Will the government heed the call of industry and public alike and gather and publish on an annual basis the economic impact of mining in the territory and make it accessible to all? If not, why not?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I know that the NDP doesn't see the value in the mining industry. I know that it was very odd to see them this weekend cozying up to the mining industry and failing to reflect what they say day in, day out in this House about mining and about the NDP's vision for ending free-entry staking, the NDP's repeated demands that government hike the royalties on mining companies — which any investor would tell you would make the Yukon much less competitive.

If the member would pay attention to what goes on in this House, the member would see this year that \$420 million in mine production is a benefit to the Yukon economy. If the member sees the increase in the Yukon economy from that and from the increase in mining exploration to record high levels — the evidence is in the increase in retail sales; the evidence is in the increase in housing development, the increase in people who have moved to the territory and the increase in people who are doing well today versus 10 years ago when the Yukon Party took office after the NDP and the Liberals decimated the economy. We see people who have prosperity, who have opportunities and who see a bright future, in stark contrast to what we saw under the NDP.

**Mr. Tredger:** I believe the minister must have misunderstood the question. I didn't ask him for the NDP position. Yukon people know what the NDP position is, and the Yukon knows that the NDP stand for responsible resource development. The question was about what this government is going to do. It is time that the government took responsibility for its actions or lack thereof.

Last year the government said that better information is a good idea. We have seen no real action. Industry wants it; the public wants it; Alaska does it. We heard the Ivory Coast has better access to information and more reliable data.

Will the minister spare us a history lesson and the excuses and tell this House why he refuses to provide the information on the economic impact of mining that would benefit industry and public alike?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** The real question for the member of the NDP is this: How can he fail to understand the benefit of this that is presented? If he looks to my colleague — the Minister of Economic Development — the work that his department has done on explaining the benefits of the industry, on extrapolating spinoff benefits, and the simple fact of the growth in resource revenues that the Yukon has seen and the growth in income tax, both corporate and personal, as a result of the growth of the mining sector in the past 10 years. The fact that we have major mines operating here today. When we took office after the NDP and Liberals had their way with the Yukon economy, we saw \$6.9 million in mining exploration, but we had a situation where there were no producing hardrock mines,

and today the total combined value for 2011 of both mine production and exploration was roughly \$780 million.

Anyone should be able to do the math on the benefit that has to the Yukon economy, on how many people today in retail sales, in restaurants, in any sector of the economy that are in service supply are benefiting directly from the mine sector and the work that goes on. Air North is another company that benefits directly from employees as a result of this.

So the evidence should be clear. I'd encourage the member for the NDP to do a little reading.

**Mr. Tredger:** It's not me who's asking the questions. I'm asking on behalf of constituents and industry, and they have all consistently asked for more reliable and regular data. Despite what the minister opposite would have us believe, the NDP has long supported a responsible mining industry in the Yukon.

The NDP created the Minerals Advisory Board, and the NDP also sees the value in foreign public discussion and industry planning for the future of the mining industry. Mining brings investments, jobs and people to our territory. It helps define us. Let's share that knowledge with the world. To best embrace future mining opportunities, all relevant information needs to be laid on the table for all to see. When will this government put aside the rhetoric and produce a comprehensive annual report on the economic impacts of mining?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I believe the word is "rhetoric", and we're hearing it from the NDP. I would point out to the member that he has stood in this House consistently and told us that Yukoners are concerned about the pace of resource development. The NDP has stood up and espoused a position of opposing the free-entry system of mining, of demanding that government hike royalties and take a position that is very negative toward every element of Yukon's mining industry.

They claim to support the mining industry, yet they attack mines, they attack exploration and they are very critical of the work that is done by Yukon citizens and do not appear to, in the view of this government, have respect for Yukoners who earn their living in this sector of the economy and the fact that the Yukon's mining techniques of today are very different than they were 60 years ago.

The fact is that the Yukon population has grown and we have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. As I pointed out to the member before, if you look at the world economic situation, Canada compared to Europe and much of the rest of the world — the Yukon compared to the rest of Canada — we are doing very well economically, and that is because we have a responsible mining sector as an important part of Yukon's economy.

I would remind the member that, in fact, the Yukon has been rated the happiest place in Canada in a recent survey, and Canada the second happiest country in the world. The rate of satisfaction has increased in the past 10 years under this Yukon Party government.

**Question re: First Nation participation in mining sector**

**Mr. Silver:** All day Saturday I attended the forum organized by the Yukon mining industry. The Premier welcomed delegates and left for the Yukon Party AGM, I believe. It would have been worth his while to stick around for that day. The issues that were discussed were extremely important to the mining community and they were similar to the ones that I raised in the House the week before. Another person who welcomed delegates to the convention was an elder from the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. She actually commented during opening prayer that she was disappointed to look out at the audience and see not so many First Nation faces — none, she said. What efforts is this government making to increase First Nation participation in the mining industry?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** We've taken a number of steps in increasing First Nation participation in the mining sector, and that includes, I would note, the work done not only by Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Education.

There is also the work that has been done by companies individually, by the Yukon Mine Training Association and others encouraging First Nation participation in the workforce.

I don't have the statistics right in front of me, but there have been a very significant number of Yukon First Nation citizens who have been trained under the work of Yukon Mine Training Association and individually by mines. That has provided significant opportunity for training. There was also a federal subsidy to encourage their participation and to help them take that training. We will continue to work with producing mines and with those coming into production, as well as with organizations and with Yukon College on trying to provide opportunities for all Yukoners, including First Nation citizens, to participate in the Yukon's mining sector should they choose to do so.

**Mr. Silver:** If the Premier had stuck around he would have heard from two presentations on the future of the Yukon mining industry. They both expressed concerns about Yukon being able to move beyond the exploration stage to investment into the production stage. One presenter used a snowmobile analogy to describe our situation. It only works if all the pieces and parts are assembled. When you have the pieces just lying around in your garage, you don't have a lot of benefit from them. His analogy suggests that Yukon's snowmobile is lying around in pieces in the garage.

The presenters focused on different things the government can control: power, roads, and regulatory regimes and raised alarm bells about all three holding us back from seeing more mines open. This was followed by a number of ministers who spoke in a panel and basically told the conference that everything was great. It would have been helpful if they had actually heard the presentations. Instead of just saying that everything was great, when is the government going to address some of the concerns that were raised by the industry itself?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** If the member were paying attention, he would realize that government has responded to things that have been identified by the Yukon Minerals Advisory

Board and others in the mining sector. In 2008, we amended the *Quartz Mining Act* to reduce the administrative costs by doing things, including allowing claim tags to be purchased before companies went out in the field to do exploration, rather than afterwards, as was the case and required at least two trips to the field; the change also to the size of claim posts from the previous four-by-four minimum requirement to 1.5-by-1.5 inch. Those changes — we have heard from exploration companies — in some cases, reduced their staking costs by as much as 50 percent and improved the efficiency, as well as reducing carbon emissions while they were going out into the field. So we have responded. We changed the *Miners Lien Act* at the request of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board previously. We will continue to work on these areas that have been identified.

The Member for Klondike knows very well that this government is continuing to address these issues, but there are always new challenges that emerge. When Capstone came on, there was surplus energy. With the additional growth through there and the Yukon's residential sector, we now need to look at what steps should be taken to meet Yukon's energy needs in the future. We will continue to work with people in doing that.

**Mr. Silver:** According to Mike Niehuser's investment in Yukon seminar, the Yukon has yet to reach its potential. In 2012, investment outside of Canada is steady, yet inside the Yukon the financing of projects has decreased considerably. Gold is the metal that sets the trends and drives the money coming into the Yukon, yet having large deposits in the ground is a far cry from having operating gold mines.

We are losing ground in mineral investment, yet we have the highest mineral potential in the world. When comparing the Yukon to the rest of the world, our biggest deterrent is infrastructure. Over 65 percent of the world's mineral investors have a problem investing in the Yukon. Almost 25 percent of these investors have strong deterrents to investing in the Yukon due to infrastructure issues like access roads, power availability. This message was given after the Premier made his speech and before the ministers arrived for their opportunity to say everything is fine.

When will the government admit that all is not well and agree with the industry experts that we have yet to find solutions for our infrastructure problems?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I think what we've heard today in a tribute from the NDP and what we're hearing from the Liberals is truly showcasing the incredible job that this government has done in the past decade to bring an industry that was almost defunct to a place now where it almost rivals the entire Yukon budget annually in terms of its investment in this territory.

We have three producing mines in the last five years — nowhere else has there been such an advancement. We have three more projects that are currently in the YESAA stage right now. We've had not the highest exploration year in 2012, but it did rank up among the greatest that we have had. Certainly, we've had the Fraser Institute rank the Yukon in the top 10 jurisdictions in the world, in terms of mining-friendly policy and our responsible development that we have in this industry.

This government has seen the population swell as a result of the return of this industry to the territory and the thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly, and the increase in opportunities for new businesses — opportunities for Yukoners and for more people to move here, which creates more diversification in this industry.

Do we have more work to do? Absolutely, but I think we are on the path to prosperity and will continue to be so.

#### **Question re: Lobbyists**

**Ms. Stick:** The Yukon Party government's desire to shut the public out and do business in secret is clear in the proposed changes to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Today I would like to ask about other public business of the Yukon Party: that's the lobbying of government by paid, private interests. We recognize that lobbyists are a part of the political system; however, the public has a legitimate fear that paid lobbyists may have unfair access to and excessive impact on government decisions. Lobbying of government decision-makers must become open and transparent to eliminate that fear and build trust. Will the Minister of Highways and Public Works do something to improve our democracy and support rules to govern the paid, private lobbying of public government officials?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** This government will talk to everyone. We do that; we have done that, and we will continue to do it. This is a small jurisdiction, and I think that you, Mr. Speaker, along with the rest of us, have to buy groceries, we go to the store, we walk down the street — we talk to people all the time. I guess I want to ask the NDP: Should NGOs be registered as lobbyists as well?

**Ms. Stick:** I think it's my chance to ask the questions and the government's responsibility to answer. Given this government's current attack on our democracy by closing the door on public access to information, the non-answer we just heard isn't surprising.

I am speaking about paid lobbyists. Yukon's Conflict of Interest Commissioner has, for many years, encouraged government to introduce legislation to govern lobbying activities — paid lobbying activities. For many years, the Yukon government has said no — no to requiring the registration of lobbyists; no to setting out a code of conduct; and no to imposing penalties for violations.

All this government seems to say yes to is suppressing information and keeping the public in the dark. Will the minister tell this House why they reject the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's suggestion to legislate paid lobbying?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I'm not quite sure where I can start. I could say for example that municipalities — would we have to register municipalities as paid lobbyists? What about the Anti-Poverty Coalition? What about FASSY? What about the Salvation Army? What about outfitters? What about wilderness tourism? What about TIA? What about the Association of Yukon Communities? What about L'Association franco-yukonnaise? What about Challenge? What about the Yukon Conservation Society, with whom I looking forward to meeting, along with Northern Cross Yukon very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, we will talk to everybody; we continue to talk to everybody. That is how this government ensures that we hear what is in the interest of Yukoners so we can continue to deliver for all Yukoners.

**Question re: Electrical rate increases**

**Mr. Tredger:** No answers there.

The Yukon Utilities Board is presiding over whether to grant a 13-percent increase in the rate consumers will pay for electricity. This will hit Yukoners hard in the pocketbook, particularly those not receiving a living wage. In the spring, the minister said his focus was on having reliable electricity, cost-effective operations and affordable electricity rates. Is a 13-percent rate increase acceptable to the minister?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I am disturbed to hear that question from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. Does he not realize that the Yukon Utilities Board is a quasi-judicial board that is responsible for making that decision. This minister and this government will not interfere in the role of that quasi-judicial board, and it's disturbing to hear the NDP and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun call for us to do that.

The Yukon Utilities Board will review the case made by the utility for that rate and they will make the decision on whether or not that rate increase should be approved, and we will respect their ability to make that decision.

**Mr. Tredger:** The rate application has given Yukoners a glimpse into how Yukon Energy is planning for the future. As the corporation seeks to increase what consumers pay, it is receiving criticism for spending millions of dollars on research into plans that likely won't come to fruition, like the Gladstone diversion scheme. The corporation also sat on a wind feasibility study, which it was given in 2009, until it was forced to release it under access to information. Demand-side management can see real energy savings. It is a low-hanging fruit and can achieve up to a 20-percent savings.

As Yukoners prepare to dig deep into their pockets to pay higher rates, can the minister explain why he hasn't instructed the corporation to put more emphasis on demand-side management?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In fact the corporation has increased its emphasis on demand-side management. The member just seems to have been blissfully unaware of this and not doing his research.

What I would again point out to the member is he needs to understand here the NDP like to take cheap shots at government whenever they can, but the NDP member just stood up here in this House and demanded that I interfere with a quasi-judicial board and asked me to step in, in an area that is properly within the role of the Yukon Utilities Board. The member should retract that statement and apologize for it.

**Question re: Mining sector development**

**Ms. Hanson:** The Yukon has a long history of mining and has experienced the highs and lows that come with the inherent volatility in world commodity prices. There is little any government can do about this volatility, despite what the members opposite might suggest, but there is much a government can do to be a good steward in getting significant benefits for

its citizens and creating a productive climate for investment. At the mining summit that was scantily attended by the members opposite, I heard industry representatives say that despite Yukon's abundant natural resources, the lack of housing in all Yukon communities and energy shortages were worrying and a major impediment to mining investment in new projects.

So despite 10 years in power, why has the Yukon Party government watched these twin crises of housing and energy develop while doing so little?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Speaking as minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I'll address part of the issues raised by the member opposite. I did have the opportunity to attend the Yukon mining summit, as well as the Yukon Producers Group reception and the opening ceremonies of the Geoscience Forum last night and the leadership brunch yesterday. I talked to a number of individuals. Some of my Cabinet colleagues, as well as the Premier, were in attendance at a number of the events already held and will attend events to come.

When it comes to housing, what we're looking at — what I've asked the Yukon Housing Corporation to investigate — is a home ownership program for low- to moderate-income Yukoners. They're looking at that and that will capture a number of the entry-level positions in the mining industry so that we can move some of those individuals who are currently residing outside the Yukon into the Yukon. Of course, the Minister of Community Services has come forward with a very aggressive plan in Whitehorse for lot development. We now have lots available for sale over the counter — something that hasn't been in place here in a number of years. So we have made tremendous effort on the housing front when it comes to addressing the concerns raised by the member opposite.

**Ms. Hanson:** What we heard from the representatives there — people who actually have mines or are poised to make significant investments — is that if there is no land available in Dawson City, no land available in Mayo, and no affordable housing available in those communities. The lack of affordable housing makes it very difficult for them to recruit newcomers to live and work in mining in the Yukon, and it means, as they said, that they're going to continue to rely on fly-in and fly-out labour — in some cases with more than 50 percent of the workers coming and going on a regular basis.

They have limited ties to the territory and, therefore, pay no taxes to our public coffers.

Now that the industry is adding its voice to the call for action on housing, will the government finally work with stakeholders to develop an affordable housing strategy that is more than talking about a one-off ad hoc approach?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** As the member knows very well, we have been taking a comprehensive approach. The member knows that, for the first time in quite awhile, we have available lots for sale over the counter in many Yukon communities and we continue to work to support the development of additional housing opportunities through the good work of my colleague, the Minister for Community Services and the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation.



It's very interesting here to see the Leader of the NDP during Geoscience Week standing up and professing to support mine development. When the member was sitting with industry investors on Saturday, did the member stand up and tell them that the NDP strategy for encouraging mining investment is to shut down the free-entry staking system — which they have demanded — hike the royalties — which they consistently demand — and to take shots at existing producers in this House?

The member has an interesting view of things, but the action the NDP has consistently demanded government take with regard to the mining industry and mineral exploration would kill the mining industry just like the NDP did the last time they were in office.

**Ms. Hanson:** It's tedious — wrong, wrong, and wrong. I suggest the member opposite read the NDP's platform. You know, we've seen these crises on energy and housing coming for years, and we've heard about the concerns of mining, not just at this summit, but at other times and other places.

As we've heard, the Yukon has nearly maxed out the capacity on the grid, and it will not be able to supply a major industrial consumer. This is not a new issue. As it stands, a mine that wants to operate will be on the hook for its own power generation, and that may mean expensive and dirty diesel power. The government should be working constructively with the industry to look at how power needs could be supplied through renewable sources and through demand-side management. Industry has needs; so too does the territory need new infrastructure. There is an opportunity to negotiate and work together in achieving these needs and to create a legacy for future generations.

Can the minister provide some detail about how he's working with the mining sector to increase the capacity of Yukon's grid?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It's good to hear the NDP now on record that they're changing their position on the free-entry system — very good to hear.

We know it's clear: the NDP are talking about energy, they're talking about housing. We're talking about problems and challenges we have as a result of the growing and vibrant economy that 10 years of Yukon Party government has created. We know that the NDP do have a solution for the housing and energy crisis, and that is to eliminate mining. When they turn mining off again and we again see thousands of Yukoners exit this territory, we won't have a problem with housing and we won't have an energy problem either.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We'll proceed with Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and 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 the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee today is Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 7, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

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

### **Bill No. 7: Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13 — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 52, Bill No. 7, *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. We will continue with general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment.

### **Department of Environment**

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this supplementary appropriation for 2012-13 for the Department of Environment. In my opening speech, I'll go through some of the details of this supplementary budget and discuss some of the items captured within.

The supplementary budget I'm presenting today for the Department of Environment would result in a modest five-percent increase in the department's budget over the \$30.8 million voted to date. Much of this increase is due to revotes or recoveries, responding to projects earlier approved by members. The projects I will highlight today show the wide range of activities undertaken by the department to protect the Yukon's environment and enable the sustainable use of renewable resources.

With respect to operation and maintenance expenditures, a total of \$1.3 million is sought. In Corporate Services, funds are sought for four projects and approval for two internal transfers, for a total of \$585,000. The first of those is \$500,000, which is sought for the first year of funding for climate change research projects. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada through its climate change adaptation program. The nine projects now underway in Yukon will increase awareness of the risks associated with climate change and help develop creative and innovative solutions for our northern environment. I would note that AANDC will provide the Yukon government with up to \$500,000 each year over the four-year span of the program.

Adaptation is an important plank of our *Climate Change Action Plan* and I had the pleasure of releasing publicly the progress report on that action plan earlier this year, in September. Under that progress report, there is a chance to present Yukoners and this Legislature some of the great work that has been done to date on climate change and indicate not only some of the work we've done, some of the work we're doing, but as well, indicate some of our plans for future work within this field.

Adaptation, as I said, is the piece that's being highlighted in this supplementary budget.

I would note that it is a goal of the *Climate Change Action Plan* and the progress report is adapting to climate change. As we know, the effects of climate change are felt intensely in Canada's north and the Yukon government is dedicating attention, time and resources — and in this budget, even more resources — so that effective adaptation measures are taken across the territory. Adaptation is both the act of coping with the negative impacts of climate change and embracing the opportunities that may arise.

The Yukon government is taking action to ensure that adaptation research and innovation projects deliver lasting, positive benefits for Yukoners. These projects increase our knowledge and awareness of the risks associated with climate change, build resilience and capacity to address these risks, and develop and implement creative and innovative solutions that will work in our northern environment. I am pleased that the federal government has been fairly supportive in this and has offered this funding program through their climate change adaptation program to fund projects being undertaken in Yukon. Of course, these projects lend some very important support, not only for the fact that they increase our knowledge and awareness of the risks and benefits, opportunities and challenges of climate change, but they bring those federal dollars to Yukon and inject them into the research and knowledge sector of our economy. Developing those research capacities here in the territory is an important aspect of the Yukon Research Centre and is the reason why we have provided such a strong level of support to that centre, both through the Department of Environment, as well as the departments of Education and Economic Development.

From 2008 to 2011, the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development provided the Yukon government with \$2.1 million over four years for adaptation projects dealing with water resources, building infrastructure, forests and climate change scenario development. The department provided additional funding in May of 2012 to support nine adaptation projects, which I'll explain here in discussion of this budget.

The Yukon government continues to work with local, territorial, provincial, national and international partners on adaptation initiatives that benefit Yukoners. Through partnership with the Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Northern Climate Exchange, the Yukon government benefits from northern-specific research and innovation projects that strengthen resilience to climate change impacts. Through the pan-territorial adaptation strategy, the governments of Yukon, Northwest Ter-

ritories and Nunavut are working together on climate change with a focus on practical adaptation measures. This partnership will host a permafrost adaptation workshop in 2013 to bring together adaptation professionals and researchers to examine and address the impacts of thawing permafrost.

In the national and international arenas, Environment Yukon staff continue to participate in climate change negotiations and program development to ensure that Yukon and northern needs are effectively addressed.

Taking timely, effective adaptation measures will contribute to the ongoing health and safety of Yukoners, advance northern innovation projects, and enable us to flourish in the face of a changing climate. I would be happy to walk through some of those projects in due course throughout this discussion in Committee of the Whole, but I'll hold off for now.

The next piece in this Corporate Services section of our budget is that the Department of Environment co-hosted this year's Yukon North Slope Conference in October. \$70,000 is sought to cover the costs incurred, and those costs are 100-percent recoverable from Canada pursuant to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. An additional \$11,000 is sought for completing all of the work identified in the 2011-12 IFA workplan — again, wholly recoverable from Canada. It was a pleasure for me to speak earlier this year in October at the opening of that North Slope Conference. I heard from a number of participants, both non-government as well as the government side, that it was a very successful conference, and it was a good opportunity for folks across the co-management spectrum in the north Yukon to discuss a number of challenges and opportunities they have in applying co-management, which is a fairly innovative and unique form of wildlife management in north Yukon.

The other projects under this section are as follows: \$10,000 is sought for the ecological landscape classification program. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Yukon College. The ELC program — ecological and land classification — supports ecosystems-based management and enhances understanding of landscape diversity and ecosystem function. Also included in this section are two small transfers from the Corporate Services area to the environmental sustainability area of \$3,000 each requested to support the Northern Research Institute and the international Youth Eco Forum the Government of Yukon hosted in August with great success.

Again, I had the pleasure of joining a number of the participants in that eco forum that was held, primarily focused around the Takhini Hot Springs facilities. I know that the participants included youth from around the circumpolar north, as well as northern Japan. They had a chance to take in a number of different activities and initiatives during their fairly short time here. It was a great opportunity for youth in the Yukon to demonstrate to youth abroad some of the fantastic work that is being done here in Yukon on climate change and other topics. They were also able to highlight for their fellow northerners around the world what a great environment and great stewardship programs we have here in Yukon.

In the environmental sustainability area, a total of \$146,000 is sought for nine activities along with approval for two internal transfers. Two revotes are needed; one for \$20,000 to cover the relocation costs of the department's new field veterinarian and one for \$4,000 for the hydro-geological assessment of the Watson Lake land treatment facility.

Activities for which funding will be 100-percent recoverable include a Richardson Mountains moose survey; a rut count of the Porcupine caribou herd and development of the Yukon conservation data centre — \$51,000 in all. Of course when it comes to conducting those sorts of ungulate surveys, including moose surveys and rut counts of the Porcupine caribou herd, the department maintains an active series of programs throughout the Fish and Wildlife Management branch, which I'll be happy to discuss today as well.

New funds, though, are needed as follows: \$25,000 for completing the Klaza caribou herd study, which has taken longer than planned as a result of poor weather conditions. The Klaza caribou herd, of course, is an important one that has been managed through the Department of Environment over the years and remains a focus of the Fish and Wildlife branch of the Department of Environment. There's a project underway this year that I should mention; of course, renewed claims staking activities, combined with ongoing mining operations in the Klondike Plateau area has highlighted the need for current information on the size, status, distribution and range of the Klaza caribou herd. This information is needed to support future project assessments and management recommendations in this increasingly industrialized landscape. So this project will follow a phased approach, allowing data evaluation at key milestones. Over the first year, radio collars will be deployed as marks that will be used to evaluate population size through a mark and resight census with marked caribou — individual female caribou can be tracked down through spring and fall to determine key calf production and survival estimates needed for the population status assessment.

These individual-based assessments will be completed by fall population level composition counts which, when coupled with past information and mortality rates from collared females, will establish the basis for detecting changes in this herd over the study period.

These key assessments will be evaluated following the first phase of this project within the first three years. We will then consider if additional information is needed to increase our understanding of the herd's use of this range and also which factors need to be considered for land use assessments and potential mitigation.

So it's these kinds of studies that are important for us to establish baseline data and determine understanding of wildlife populations in the face of increased activity in that area. This demonstrates just one of the initiatives we're undertaking to build that understanding and baseline data.

As we know, caribou distribution and herd concentration information will support land management recommendations by providing a current evaluation of key caribou ranges. These will be relevant to the current mining activity and the mineral

staking activity and can be contrasted with former key area descriptions and with local knowledge within the community.

This data will provide a foundation or basis for future assessments of avoidance and effects this herd may be experiencing under the current land use activity. Gathering fine-grained or spatially accurate information on caribou habitat use will enable an examination of habitat selection by caribou in relation to landscape factors, such as habitat quality, access corridors or level of activities on existing or future potential corridors. By deploying satellite GPS radio collars, a cost-effective assessment of movement rates and animal distribution will be gathered via frequent satellite downloads of GPS information from each collar. Overall results support modelling landscape characteristics and habitat selection to demographic rates, relating habitat availability to populations. Existing key area maps will be enhanced with each year's successive data.

Following that, in this section of the budget, there is \$20,000 for completing the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Aishihik wood bison management plan. Those are two reports that I know a lot of members in this House would be familiar with. In the case of the wolf management plan, I had the pleasure of approving this plan as recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board earlier this year in April.

In my opinion, it's an excellent plan that really focuses on a small-scale localized approach to managing wolves and certainly relies to a greater degree on RRCs and local groups for information.

Something that has received some attention in this plan is the recommendation against the use of aerial wolf-kill techniques for wolf management, which I know has been a topic of fairly intense discussion in many years past, but remains an interesting one, particularly in light of the announcement by British Columbia that they are going to undertake a wolf management plan in that province as well. A certain degree of interest has been associated with wolf management over the years.

As well, the *Management Plan for the Aishihik Wood Bison Herd in Southwestern Yukon (2012)* is indeed an excellent plan. It was approved earlier this fall. I don't believe it was tabled in this House, but I certainly tabled the wolf plan earlier this year — I believe in the spring session. The *Management Plan for the Aishihik Wood Bison Herd in Southwestern Yukon (2012)* is an excellent plan that was recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, done in conjunction with a number of RRCs, First Nations and others in the southwestern Yukon area.

It's an interesting plan, in that the wood bison are recognized nationally as a species at risk, so the management plan for this herd reflects that management need for a species that is recognized nationally as being at risk but, of course, in the Yukon, it has a fairly healthy population. The recommendation from the plan and through the Fish and Wildlife Management Board was to maintain the herd at or around 1,000 animals. I believe that currently, the herd is around 1,300, which is quite a bit above that recommended level, which means that we'll be

able to maintain the hunting as an active management tool for this herd, which I know is important for many Yukoners who like to get out, especially around this time of year — the winter months — when other hunting opportunities aren't available, and bison offer a very exciting hunt and a tasty snack at the end of the day. I know the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources really enjoys bison as well. I can tell from his off-microphone comments that he enjoys bison burgers.

As well, I would note that the Aishihik wood bison management plan for the herd in southwestern Yukon has four goals: ensuring the long-term viability of the Aishihik wood bison herd; providing opportunities for human use and appreciation of wood bison; acknowledging and addressing conflicts between bison and humans; and addressing land use and ecosystem considerations on the range of the Aishihik wood bison herd. The plan, as I said, is a good one, and we're going to be moving forward with implementing it over the next little while.

Seeing the time, I'll wrap up my comments on the wood bison herd, but I would mention that I'll bring that up again because there are some interesting issues with implementation that I'll be happy to elaborate on.

Following that, in this section of the budget, we have \$20,000 for preliminary work to develop an air quality management system, in keeping with the Government of Yukon's commitment at the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment meeting in October, to support this Canada-wide initiative. I would note that there is a motion on the floor of this House currently to encourage the government to continue that support and that work, and I'd be happy to explain some of that work in greater detail throughout today.

In the environmental liabilities and remediation area, a total of \$571,000 is sought for two important cleanups of contaminated sites. \$153,000 is to be revoted to complete the assessment work of the Swift River highway maintenance camp. Assessment is the first step in determining the nature and extent of contamination. Usually hydrocarbons and salt are at highway camps and tend to be the contaminants of relevance. From there, the best options for cleanup are determined.

So when we do those early-stage assessments, we often do some on-the-ground work, which sometimes includes drilling, where we determine the characterization of the contamination and then, based on that characterization, we are able to determine a plan for cleaning up the site.

Seeing that my time has elapsed, I will cede the floor.

**Ms. White:** I'd like to start by thanking the officials for their thorough briefing. It was quite a treat to have six in the room when I entered. I'd also like to acknowledge the hard work done by conservation officers this summer, in the wake of a very difficult time due to the poor berry crops. They worked tirelessly and under extreme duress to deal with the increased number of human-bear encounters. Speaking for the NDP Official Opposition caucus and me, I appreciate the efforts of all Environment Yukon employees, and especially the COs. I know the summer wasn't easy for them and my heart goes out to them.

With increased people on the land being tourists, industry folks, hunters, or just Yukoners enjoying themselves, all throughout the summer we heard often that the resources of the conservation officers are stretched. COs do not only conduct hunting and fishing checks in remote areas; they are also very close to us and check out our backyards, if we need them to. They respond to citizen concerns — bears, coyotes, beavers, road kills, injured wildlife, nuisance wildlife, and more. COs go out to the communities to talk about bear awareness; they come when we call them; and they work alongside biologists.

I was wondering — in this day and age and with all the responsibilities — if there are enough conservation officers in the territory. We have 16 altogether, and it's almost the size of Spain. So I'm wondering if the department has taken a full analysis of the responsibilities, expectation, and workloads of the Conservation Officer Services, and will we see more being hired in the near future?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Before I get on with the member's question, I would like to continue with some of the notes I have regarding this budget.

As I was saying, first of all, under the environmental liabilities and remediation area, a total of \$571,000 is sought for two important cleanups of contaminated sites. Firstly, \$153,000 is to be revoted to complete the assessment work of the Swift River highway maintenance camp, which I mentioned; and second, funds totalling \$418,000 are needed to advance the remediation of the Marwell tarpit, the largest, single-source hydrocarbon contaminated site in Yukon. Assessment work is well underway. Once this is complete, options for remediation can be developed.

With respect to capital expenditures, an increase of \$298,000 is sought. Work on department facilities accounts for about one-third of this amount, or \$105,000. Funds are needed for the exterior painting of the office in Dawson City earlier this summer. Minor fixes for the three-year-old Tombstone Interpretive Centre, such as completing fire retardant painting and fixing some cracks in the floor, have been completed as well. The largest project, and the only one yet to be completed, is the effort to mitigate erosion of the Marsh Lake shoreline below the Swan Haven viewing platform. Given the heavy use this facility receives in April during the annual Celebration of Swans, this is an investment that will benefit many Yukoners and visitors.

A revote of \$60,000 is sought for funds used to upgrade the ranger accommodations at Herschel Island, Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park, pursuant to government obligations set out in the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, and is 100-percent recoverable from Canada. An additional revote of \$54,000 is sought for funds to complete the reconstruction of the staircase and boardwalk at the Five Finger Rapids recreational site. Two new programs need \$68,000 for operational equipment: a new riverboat for patrols by conservation officers from the Carmacks district office, and a bear trap and animal storage container for the animal health program team. Lastly, a revote of \$11,000 is needed to support the ongoing development of the Yukon Environment Information System, a collection of information management systems, which will eventually support a managed

approach to organizing and distributing the department's operational data.

This supplementary estimate also has three adjustments to third party recoveries resulting in an overall decrease of \$10,000; two recoveries totalling \$20,000 from Yukon College for the ecological land classification project, and an Arctic grayling genomics project; two recoveries totalling \$20,000 from the Gwitchin Renewable Resources Board for a caribou rut count and moose survey and an adjustment of \$50,000 to reflect a reduced recovery from the Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

Of course, I should report to the House that yesterday the Yukon Wildlife Preserve had its annual general meeting, during which they went over a number of issues. Of course, it has been a pleasure of mine to support the Yukon Wildlife Preserve over the year and a bit, I guess, that I've been minister of both Environment and Economic Development, as they have been keen to tap into some of the funding programs available through the Department of Economic Development.

As we know, the vision of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve is to be an internationally recognized centre of Arctic and boreal ecology and knowledge, to promote knowledge and foster appreciation of Arctic and boreal ecology through the creation of a centre of northern education, conservation and research excellence at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. I've mentioned to the House a number of times before those three key points that the Wildlife Preserve likes to hammer home — that education, conservation and research are, of course, their focus.

At that AGM, they highlighted some of the important new infrastructure developments that have been made at the Wildlife Preserve, including a new sign, which really reflects their branding, with the picture of the leaf, the hoofprint and the palm.

Included among those completed infrastructure projects — I would highlight some: one is a large flight aviary for large raptors and a smaller aviary as well. I believe that at least one of those projects was funded through the community development fund.

One that I know for sure was funded through the community development fund was the installation of cement pads around all nine of their animal feeding stations. I had the chance to go out, upon completion of that project, and inspect the cement pads at the site and visit with the executive director and a few of the staff. The new cement pads make it a lot easier for the staff to feed the animals and clean up in the feeding area, as they are able to brush off the cement pads.

Safety barriers in the wood bison and muskox paddocks were recently completed as well and they are now painted with the welcome assistance of a number of different volunteer groups.

I'd be remiss if I didn't highlight two major milestones that were achieved this year by the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. The first one, which I've mentioned before, is the full accreditation granted to them by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

In September of this year, they received accreditation with no special conditions, as I recall, which I understand is quite unique for a new establishment or institution to receive. I had

the chance to congratulate the executive director and the board on a fantastic achievement. It's the first accredited institution north of 60 and one of 26 in Canada. That was certainly a great achievement for them.

Another somewhat smaller but no less important achievement was the designation by the small employer certificate of recognition — SECOR — a health and safety designation from the Northern Safety Network Yukon. Off the top of my head, Madam Chair, I believe they received 92 percent on that assessment and, from what we heard, the individual doing the assessment of the facilities and the health and safety designation — that was the highest mark that inspector had ever given. It's certainly a reflection of the excellent commitment to safety and health of employees, as well as the animals and visitors to the Wildlife Preserve as well.

I would certainly like to congratulate the Yukon Wildlife Preserve for their accreditation with Northern Safety Network Yukon, which also occurred earlier this year, in September. There are a number of projects that are going on at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. I think there are probably too many for me to list today, but I should point out a few important ones. There is the planned completion of the double perimeter fence, five new automatic water stations, the move out of the farm service buildings so they can demolish that old building, the removal of all wire aprons from inside the paddocks and the removal of pig tails from paddock fencing. I noticed that a number of these projects that are planned and have been completed recently are or were as a result of the accreditation process with CAZA. The assessors from CAZA visited Yukon a number of times, but the most recent time, I had a chance to join them. They noted that, while it's always important to recognize the success they've had, it's good to set goals and continue to strive to be better. They did come up with a list of projects that, while providing accreditation, they recommended should be done as well, on top of that. I know a number of these that I mentioned so far are just that.

I should note that also included among that is the development of a new health and safety management system and the review and development of new animal care policies or procedures as a result of the accreditation process and recommendations from the assessors. They're working on new standoff barriers for a number of different species and new locks have been installed at all feeding stations; all of the padlocked gates have been upgraded to ensure that the gates cannot be lifted off their hinges or pins. There is, very importantly, a new outhouse that is important for visitors in the summer, especially when you're walking around up into the high points where you're a long way away from the beginning facility, and if you had a coffee like I had when I was on that trip, I certainly appreciated the new outhouse.

Additional security cameras have been added, which is important not only for the safety of the facility itself, but also for the safety of the animals; all crawl spaces have been secured and all outbuildings have been secured. The apartment above the building over by the lab has been renovated and furnished for intern research opportunities.

This year was a very successful year for them as well, not just because they had received accreditation and certification from SECOR, but they've grown their wildlife collection. Presently they have 12 elk, two moose, 13 caribou, 36 mule deer, five Dall sheep, 10 Stone sheep, three bighorn sheep, 20 mountain goats, 14 muskox, 12 bison, five lynx, three Arctic fox and, currently among their permanent rehab residents, they have four snowshoe hares, one short-eared owl, one bald eagle, one peregrine falcon, and one northern goshawk, for a total of 139 collection animals and eight rehab residents.

Earlier this spring when I visited the Wildlife Preserve it was baby season, so it was a delight for me and especially my partner, Brittany, to visit with some of the baby animals there. There were new mule deer, thimhorn sheep, mountain goats, caribou and lynx — all had babies at the preserve this spring. The lynx, unfortunately, were a little recalcitrant and didn't come out to visit when I was there so I didn't see them, but I did see the baby mountain goats, which are something else.

On the staffing side, the Yukon Wildlife Preserve has benefited significantly from internships with the American Bald Eagle Foundation, which allows folks from around North America to come to Yukon and do some internship work. They come from all over North America, including Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Yukon. When I was there, I believe the young lady was from Florida and certainly was able to provide some external validation for what an amazing facility the Wildlife Preserve is and how it shapes up against what she has seen in Florida.

Four new interns are scheduled for 2012, plus an additional intern for an eight-week rotation, which is excellent for the staff to build on not only the knowledge of the current staff, but staff also from outside the Yukon coming to the preserve to fulfill those key mandates of research and education.

Of course, as I mentioned, the third and very important function of the Wildlife Preserve is rehabilitation. I know that 2011-12 offered a number of success stories when it comes to the rehabilitation of a number of different species. I would note that a number of animals were treated and released from the Wildlife Preserve in the 2011-12 year. There were two flicker, one woodpecker, two robin, two herring gulls, two mallard ducks, one flying squirrel, four bald eagles, four red squirrels, one sandhill crane, one raven and two great horned owls.

Unfortunately, not all animals that come to the Wildlife Preserve are able to be treated and released; some unfortunately have to be euthanized or they die on their own. That is unfortunate, but I would note that of the 43 animals taken in during the 2011-12 year, 22 were treated and released, which is about 65 percent. Of the remaining 16 animals, 35 percent were deceased or euthanized. As I said, not all animals that come into the care of the Wildlife Preserve can be saved, unfortunately. Sometimes they are beyond even the very capable hands and skills of the staff there. That's indeed unfortunate, but I think that 65 percent is a fairly remarkable number, nonetheless.

This year, 2012, the preserve will be exporting a few animals. One juvenile Rocky Mountain goat kid was successfully

transferred to the Calgary Zoo earlier this month, and it's thought a juvenile Canadian lynx may be transferred to the Seneca Park Zoo either later this year or early next year.

I know my time is short this time around, Madam Chair, so I will get back to the budget, but I would like to once again reiterate my support and ongoing support for the Wildlife Preserve.

The member opposite I believe asked a question about conservation officers. Of course, as she noted, this year was a very challenging year for COs in the summertime as a result of poor berry crops and general changes in the food structure for bears. A number of grizzly bears came down out of the higher alpine mountains and in doing so pushed some of the black bear population closer into town into conflict with a number of humans, including here in Whitehorse and especially in my neighbourhood and riding of Copperbelt North.

Hundreds of bear sightings were reported this year and Environment Yukon responded to 277 complaints — 38 bears were relocated and unfortunately 61 were killed; 41 by COs and 21 by the public. I want to emphasize that prevention through ongoing education and the elimination of attractants remains the highest priority for the department. Relocating or killing a bear is absolutely the last resort, and I know from speaking with a number of COs that they most certainly do not take any gratification in having to relocate or kill a bear. It is indeed the absolute last resort that must be taken.

I know that a number of MLAs in this House, as well as Yukoners in general, had experiences with bears this summer. I'm sure we'll agree that the conservation officers provided absolutely exemplary service this year. They really go above and beyond when it comes to their call of duty. In some cases, they would respond to calls in the middle of the night or very early in the morning all around the Yukon and all around Whitehorse and, of course, would steadfastly respond to those. I know from speaking to a number of constituents in either urban or rural areas that they had very positive interactions with conservation officers this year. It was through their very good work that we can happily say that, even at this very high level of bear activity, there were no human fatalities as a result of human-bear conflict, which is a tremendous thing to recognize because of the fact that we did have, really, an unprecedented number of human-bear conflicts.

With respect to the number of conservation officers, of course last year we introduced two new officers in Carmacks, so there was a new office established in Carmacks. That includes one full-time and one part-time conservation officer, and we've been able to establish, with some First Nation funding, a First Nation liaison position in Whitehorse. While conservation officers are at times stretched, we're confident with the investments we've been making in their services, that the current suite of officers is currently meeting the needs of Yukon. Should increased activity occur or increased need be identified, we would consider it at that time.

Madam Chair, I know you are very interested in this because it's in your riding. We are planning to construct new conservation officer and other Environment staff offices in Watson Lake, which is a significant capital expenditure for the Depart-

ment of Environment. As you know, Madam Chair, this is a much-needed one, as the previous facility was at the end of its life as a usable building. I believe work on that is ongoing, and I look forward to reporting back to this House with information about the construction of the new CO and Environment offices in Watson Lake. I think that answers the member opposite's question.

I know that I only have a few seconds left, but I do want to note one further time that I would encourage all Yukoners to really visit Environment Yukon's website to determine the best ways that they can reduce attractants around their yards and really do their part to minimize human-bear conflict, both in the Whitehorse area and in rural areas as well.

**Ms. White:** I'm unsure as to whether or not the minister heard when I asked about a full analysis of the responsibilities, expectations and workloads of Conservation Officer Services, but I'll put that on record for next time. Excellent — so, possibly new COs will be hired — fabulous.

On the website today, I read a warning to motorists in regard to the Carcross caribou herd and their winter migration. As we are all aware, the Carcross caribou cross the Alaska and Tagish highways in this migration. In the spring, we asked about what actions the government is taking to reduce the number of killed and injured caribou on the highways between Judas Creek and Tagish. In particular, Highways and Public Works and Environment Yukon were exploring the use of mixing small amounts of lithium chloride in their road salt. Lithium chloride makes the salt taste bad to the caribou. This is important because the caribou routinely stop in the road and lick the salt, and this in turn, makes them targets for trucks, cars and big rigs especially.

While we're on the subject of the Carcross caribou herd, the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee and residents in Carcross have raised concerns over B.C. allowing big game outfitters in B.C. to hunt the Carcross caribou herd.

The Carcross-Tagish First Nation has a very successful hunting ban in place. Environment Yukon does not allow a resident harvest. Not only does B.C.'s action undermine the recovery efforts for the Carcross caribou herd, but it is very galling for Carcross residents to see B.C. outfitters making their way up by boat with caribou or a caribou in the back of their trucks.

I would like to ask the minister where the joint initiative is with the lithium chloride, what other actions the minister is undertaking to reduce the number of road kills of the Carcross caribou herd, and whether or not he has contacted his Environment minister counterpart in B.C. as to the hunting of caribou across the border.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** With regard to the partnership between the Department of Environment and the Department of Highways and Public Works with regard to trying to reduce the amount of animal mortality as a result of accidents on the highway, we have a number of things ongoing. Of course, as the member opposite correctly noted, lithium chloride does offer some opportunity to be mixed with road salt to, when it's spread on the highway, be less of an attractant to caribou.

We did have a project last year which we intended to do in the southern Yukon in partnership with the Department of Highways and Public Works. I would note that the Liard First Nation, in particular, had some misgivings about the use of lithium chloride in salt and were very adamant that it should not be used. As far as I know, the most recent status of that project is that we are continuing to engage with them and determine other methods for reducing caribou traffic accidents.

I know that the Department of Environment and the Department of Highways and Public Works remain engaged on a number of other initiatives like signage. Those include placing signs on highways that are frequented by caribou in their migration paths to really make motorists aware that caribou are migrating in the area and that there are significant high caribou density areas that motorists need to be aware of. We certainly have some activities with Highways and Public Works on signage.

The lead for that was the regional biologist in the Watson Lake area on the lithium chloride project. If there are changes in perspectives from the First Nation or if there is another area that's looking at doing a pilot project as such, of course we would be interested to hear from them.

With regard to the Carcross caribou herd, we remain engaged with our counterparts in British Columbia to manage that herd, as it is a transboundary herd. There are a number of challenges with transboundary herds in that they, for some reason, don't seem to respect the political boundaries that are on the map and travel back and forth. I know that in our work with First Nations around developing some initiatives to deal with the threat of chronic wasting disease, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has noted that the fact that the Carcross caribou herd is an important food source for them and that anything that occurs on either side of the border does affect them. They really wanted to highlight for us the importance of that herd to them as a food source and of a traditional hunting opportunity. With regard to B.C. outfitters hunting in northern B.C., again, I would say that we remain engaged with our departmental counterparts in British Columbia.

I haven't spoken with the minister about it particularly, but I know that staff has been engaged at that level. At this time, I don't have anything further to report on it.

**Ms. White:** Madam Chair, it's unfortunate we can't put up signs for the caribou to read: "Stay on the Yukon side. It's safe." Maybe we can teach caribou to read at some point.

With the current situation, and the government's desire to open up the southeast Yukon to oil and gas development, knowing that Environment Yukon is doing water baseline studies in areas like the White Gold and the Rakla because of their substantial increase in development activity, has Environment Yukon begun to look into what studies, data requirements and work needs to be done now to promote responsible decision-making in the Liard Basin area, and if not, wouldn't it be wise to get out ahead of the curve and do some preliminary planning?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** As the member opposite noted, we have made a number of investments throughout the Yukon while increasing our understanding of baseline data throughout

the Yukon where we see increased levels of activity. Of course, the Rakla area is one of them, as the member mentioned, and we have done much work in that area.

I had a chance to visit the Rakla region this summer, and it's a beautiful area. It's beautiful not only for its aesthetic qualities but is a focus of a significant amount of activity through mineral resource development and exploration.

When we identify areas of increased activity, we tend to activate ourselves and begin identifying ways that we can build our baseline data and information with regard to the effects of that activity on the data. In the Rakla and White Gold belts we have done that, and we have a proven record in regard to responding to the needs of environmental assessments and increased activity.

We have done that before. If the member has specific questions about the oil and gas resources in southern Yukon, I would suggest she raise them with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources at the time of budget debate on that department. I should note that we are actively engaged in the development of a Yukon water strategy, and I would be happy to discuss that a little bit at this time because of the fact that water resources are so important to Yukoners and to this government.

Earlier this year we had a chance to engage in a stakeholders meeting, which I spoke at, and it involved a number of different stakeholders from governments — various branches and departments — as well as First Nations and municipal level officials. The next step for that process is underway right now; work is being done internally with regard to the development of a water strategy for Yukon and I look forward to engaging in the next stage of that development in due course. Of course, there are a few key issues that I'm sure, even though we're still at the draft stage, will be involved in a water strategy. Those are, of course, first of all developing an understanding of the vision and principles that Yukon government will use to make decisions affecting water resources — that was certainly an issue that was raised at the stakeholders meeting earlier this year; and generating a better understanding of Yukon's water resources and especially our groundwater resources that we currently know so little about, but will be an important function of a water strategy for Yukon.

Developing and understanding of the groundwater resources is very important, not only for the management of water resources, but for the management of a variety of land uses and water uses that will possibly affect groundwater.

I would expect that facilitating improved collaboration among water decision-makers in various governments and organizations will be an important aspect of the water strategy that we'll ultimately develop. We know that there are federal, territorial, First Nation and municipal players when it comes to water resources and the management of water resources in the territory and we must ensure that there is, to the best degree possible, a seamless interaction between those many levels of government, industry and First Nations when it comes to water management.

We know that the municipalities are interested in groundwater and ensuring that their communities have access to con-

tinued safe drinking water. I would imagine that drinking water would be an important aspect of a water strategy. This government has made significant investments over the years in terms of maintaining and improving our access to safe drinking water.

I know that a number of projects have occurred in a number of communities throughout the Yukon — Teslin is one that comes to mind. I know that the Minister of Community Services has been very active with regard to putting a focus on the relationship between Yukon and municipalities when it comes to municipal infrastructure. Municipal infrastructure is very important when considering water resources and the management of water resources because it is those communities that, in many cases, provide a number of services related to water.

One of the things that is important to recognize as well is the effect of the changing climate in Yukon and the effect that has on our water resources. We've undertaken a number of initiatives throughout the years to better understand the effects of climate change on water resources. As the member has noted before, water is a priority action identified in the progress report of the *Climate Change Action Plan*. The Water Resources branch of Environment Yukon and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada have completed a water resources risk and vulnerability assessment that highlights current and forecasted water resource issues in Yukon related to climate change.

The associated web-based information tool provides water data and information useful to water users and water managers wanting to adapt their water programs to a changing hydrologic regime. I would encourage members to visit <http://yukonwater.ca/>, which is an excellent resource for examining the current suite of water resource information that's available. What we're intending to do with the Water Resources website is make it a one-stop shop for information about water in Yukon. It's the intent of the department to have a focal point, a point where all different levels of government can input their information and have it combined and aggregated there so that Yukoners can see the full suite of available information on Yukon water. I think that will be important in continuing to properly manage Yukon's water resources, which we'll do throughout the Yukon, including areas of increased activity.

The member mentions the southeast Yukon. While we haven't seen any new activity going on there or any proposals for new activity, we have not identified the need for additional environmental information. But, of course, as we do, to the best of our abilities in the department, we try to identify areas of activity and increased activity that will require us to do work to develop our understanding of the important environmental and ecological resources and values in the area. So if we note an increased amount of activity or an increased amount of development, we'll respond by taking the necessary measures to build our baseline data and information sets, so that we can appropriately respond further to that activity. So I think that answers the member opposite's question for that section.



**Ms. White:** In 2005, the Yukon Party government sought to amend the *Wildlife Act* so that it would be consistent with First Nation final agreements. Since then, the *Wildlife Act* contains many inconsistencies as a result of land claims in the Yukon. For example, the act currently says that non-Yukon residents need a Yukon guide to allow them to hunt, subject to various rules; however, this section is inconsistent with the rights of the Tetlit Gwich'in from the Northwest Territories to hunt in their primary and secondary use areas. The Tetlit Gwich'in do not need a guide, as they have aboriginal harvesting rights in the Yukon, but the act implies that they do.

I believe this needs to be fixed. Will the minister confirm the initiative is moving forward? What are his next steps, and how will Yukoners and First Nation governments be involved in this process?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** When it comes to the management of wildlife resources in Yukon, there are a number of challenges that face the Yukon government. In some cases, those challenges are met with opportunities as well. One of the interesting things about wildlife management in Yukon is, of course, that we have what we refer to as co-management, which comes out of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the First Nation final agreements, which establish a number of bodies, like the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the renewable resources councils. With regard to the implementation of the regulations under the *Wildlife Act*, there is an annual process for the review and amendment of those regulations, which is conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

There are a number of proposed wildlife regulations that are currently being reviewed by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, which are available publicly on their website.

When it comes to implementing those wildlife regulations, we rely on the continued collaboration of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the renewable resources councils, as well as First Nations.

The *Wildlife Act* regulations that are proposed to be changed this year are, as I said, available on the Fish and Wildlife Management Board's website, but I would note some of the ones that are important, because they do reflect some of the management planning activities we have undertaken previously. I believe four of the proposed regulation changes currently are consistent with our implementation of the Yukon wolf conservation and management plan which, as I mentioned earlier, I had the pleasure of accepting, as recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, earlier this year.

The *Wildlife Act* regulation amendments are currently being proposed which will include, as I said with regard to the wolf plan, the implementation of adaptive management for wolf management in the Yukon, as well as a few amendments that are related to the seal fee and whether or not the seal fee needs to be applied to Yukon licensed hunters. I'll encourage Yukoners and members in this House to review those online and submit their comments.

Wildlife management in the Yukon is defined by a number of co-management boards and those include, as mentioned by

the member opposite, the Tetlit Gwich'in and some in the Northwest Territories First Nations as well. As I noted before, I had the opportunity to speak at the North Slope Conference, which offered a venue for co-management bodies, government and staff to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities that are associated with co-management in northern Yukon. There were a number of panels there at that conference. I would like to mention a few of them because I think they're relevant for today's discussion.

The first was Applied Co-management: Challenges and Innovation, which had a number of participants and panelists, including the Chair of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the Northwest Territories; the director of wildlife for Makivik Corporation; the director of wildlife and environment for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.; the secretariat of the Tornat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat; the director of wildlife for Environment Yukon for Government of Yukon; the regional biologist for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development for the Government of Northwest Territories; and the chair of the Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board, who is a facilitator and a lawyer.

Another interesting panel that was at that conference was Integrating Science, Traditional Knowledge and Communities in research and Resource Management. That one discussed the evolving relationship between science-based and traditional knowledge and research management. The participation of communities and research programs have been heavily influenced by co-management arrangements established under the land claims agreements. The agreements generally require full consideration of the contributions of local and traditional knowledge in wildlife environmental management. Notwithstanding, the relationship has been challenging and, at times, uneasy. In addition, traditional knowledge studies have and will come under increasing scrutiny with respect to their methodology and rigour.

What I found about that session — and all the sessions that were conducted at that conference — was that a function of the topics were always the role of co-management boards and co-management bodies in implementing wildlife management in the north. With regard to the implementation of regulations under the *Wildlife Act*, co-management boards like the RRCs and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board play a very important role. Section 16 of the UFA is very clear that the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board is the primary instrument for renewable resource management in the territory and that RRCs are the primary instrument for renewable resource management in traditional territories.

I believe there is some experience in this House certainly with RRCs. I know the MLA for Kluane and the Minister of Highways and Public Works formerly sat on an RRC and, on a somewhat regular basis, reminds me of section 16 of the act when we're discussing wildlife management in the territory. There are challenges with the *Wildlife Act* itself, as it does contain some antiquated provisions that relate to some of the history of the development of that act.

Of course, we're interested in moving forward with possible changes to that. I won't make any commitment to the tim-

ing of that, but I would note that we're engaging with First Nations to discuss the challenges that exist with the current act and its implementation. The potential amendment of the *Wildlife Act* would be a process that's developed under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, and it would include renewable resources councils and Fish and Wildlife Management Board consultations, as well as consultations with the First Nations themselves, and ultimately a decision by Cabinet to make those changes and bring them to the Legislature for debate and discussion.

So we are certainly aware of the challenges currently in the act and are interested in continuing to work with our partners, the First Nations, as well as the very important co-management boards of the RRCs and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board which, as I noted before, under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* are the primary instruments of renewable resource management in the territory.

So I look forward to working with those groups as we have done over my time as minister. I think the relationship we currently have between the government and the co-management boards is very strong and it's a result, I think, of the good work done by the Department of Environment in fostering those relationships. For evidence of the good relationship, we can look to some of the work that I've discussed in this House already in the *Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan* and the management plan for the Aishihik wood bison herd in the southwestern Yukon. Those are both examples of some excellent work done, not only by department staff, but by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and their staff in ushering that process of plan development through to its conclusion. Now, just as we leaned on them for support in developing these plans, so too will we lean on them for support in implementing them.

I look forward to bringing forward additional amendments that are consistent with both of those plans — the *Wolf Conservation and Management Plan* and the management plan for the Aishihik wood bison herd in southwestern Yukon, as well as a number of plans that we conduct with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the RRCs.

To wrap up my comments, Madam Chair, I would say that yes, there are challenges with the act in its current form and we're interested in engaging with First Nations and co-management boards to determine what the best ways are for us to go forward. I look forward to those discussions with First Nations, with RRCs and with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board to determine how we are going to move forward and we'll report back to the House in due course as we determine the next steps for wildlife management and for the *Wildlife Act* in Yukon.

**Ms. White:** I'm just going to switch the focus now toward the *Environment Act*. When the *Environment Act* was made law, it was considered one of the best in Canada. It included innovative ideas and processes, like state of the environment reporting, a Yukon conservation strategy, and it clearly understood the linkages between a healthy environment and the people, our cultures and the economy.

Unfortunately, this council has been inactive for most of the Yukon Party's 10 years in power. The makeup of the council was to include representation from aboriginal people, business or industrial associations, environmental non-governmental groups, labour unions and municipal governments. This was to be a council on both the environment and the economy and the interplay between the two.

The council mandate included undertaking and encouraging public discussion of the economy and the environment and their interrelationship, reviewing the policies of the Government of Yukon and evaluate their implementation in relation to the objectives of this act, conducting research on the economy and the environment and promoting public awareness of the importance of sustainable development.

The council was also to report annually on the above. The council provided an avenue for Yukoners concerned about government decisions and processes to lodge those concerns with the council if the complainant did not feel that government had adequately addressed those concerns.

Will the minister reconstitute the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment, as the *Environment Act* mandates? This actually leads to another question because so far we haven't used it. It has come to our attention that a review of the *Environment Act* is being considered by this government. Is this government going to review the *Environment Act* and, if so, what are the timelines, and what will the process for involving Yukoners and First Nation governments be?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Thanks to the member opposite for the question. The member was correct that the *Environment Act* was brought into force a number of years ago. While her opinion is that it was state of the art at the time, I would postulate that it is most certainly not currently state-of-the-art. Some of the provisions of the *Environment Act* during the period in which it was brought forward are antiquated, as they don't reflect a number of the provisions of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the final agreements, devolution, and a number of political and constitutional legal developments that have been made since then.

For instance, the role of the Council on the Economy and the Environment has certainly disappeared. That function, as identified in the act, is most certainly irrelevant currently, especially with the advent of YESAA — the federal legislation that provides for environmental and socio-economic assessments of projects in the Yukon. YESAB is the primary assessment mechanism for reviewing projects in the Yukon, and it is indeed that body — the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board — that would conduct the kind of work that I think was planned under the Council on the Economy and the Environment. The change in time and the change in management practices have really rendered that council, identified in the act, irrelevant and certainly doesn't reflect the role of YESAB in assessing and providing recommendations to the government on projects that are brought forward. Of course, YESAB is a body that provides recommendations and requires the government to respond to them, by accepting, rejecting or modifying those recommendations, as we have discussed previously.

In the case of the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment as outlined in the *Environment Act*, I would say it's entirely irrelevant currently, and that's why it hasn't been reconstituted over the years.

With regard to other provisions of the *Environment Act*, of course, as I've said, there are cases where the *Environment Act* isn't consistent with a number of other pieces of legislation — either territorial or federal — and it certainly doesn't reflect the changes that have occurred in project management and environmental assessment over the years. It's something that we are well aware of, and I look forward to working with First Nations and other stakeholders while continuing to conduct reviews of whether or not there is a need to amend that act.

I won't be indicating specific timelines as this point, but I would note that we are interested in clarifying some of the provisions of the *Environment Act* because of the fact that they are outdated and don't reflect the current management or assessment regime in place in the Yukon.

With regard to the Yukon conservation strategy — this is another dated obligation that is quite irrelevant in today's reality and world. Rather than conduct a conservation strategy, a number of other newer management regimes are found throughout other pieces of legislation that we will continue to implement and engage. That's yet another example of the dated-ness of the act. As I've said, we have an interest in considering making changes to that act, but we most certainly don't have specific timelines at this point with regard to the *Environment Act*.

**Ms. White:** I'm going to tackle one of my favourite subjects: Species at risk.

We have an obligation under the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* to develop species at risk legislation. The government felt that it was important enough to take three tries at it, but we get told repeatedly that it is now not needed. The Yukon species at risk public consultation in 2008 was over five months long, possibly the longest in the Yukon Party's history as far as public consultation goes. Then Environment Yukon engaged Yukon First Nations in a working group to finalize the legislation and this took at least another year. This legislation still hasn't been brought forward. So not only does this government have a signed obligation to develop species at risk legislation, but they also engaged Yukon First Nations in a detailed and time-consuming process.

By letting ourselves be ruled by the federal *Species at Risk Act*, we're leaving ourselves open to decisions being made in Ottawa, Vancouver or somewhere outside of the territory. That sometimes is a bit frustrating. The federal law and processes that the minister opposite has told us about apply to the federally listed species. If there are species in the Yukon that are at risk of loss or extirpation, but which would not be lost federally, then the Yukon has very few tools with which to deal with it and that can be applied, because we do not have a Yukon act that looks after Yukon-specific species and protects Yukon's biodiversity.

So far the Yukon does not have all the tools necessary to protect the plants, mammals and invertebrates. There is no legislative tool to address plants in the Yukon unless they have a

commercial value and fall under the *Forest Resources Act*. Where in any legislation are the tools, processes and mechanisms to deal with invertebrates or amphibians, for example?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Yes, this is an interesting topic that we've discussed in this House a number of times. Of course the member opposite in Question Period — I believe it was last week — brought forward a report from an Ontario-based advocacy group that indicated unfavorably on Yukon — or it certainly indicated that we apparently weren't doing a good enough job, which I most certainly took issue with and responded to in the news media.

At this point on this issue, I have to just fundamentally disagree with the member opposite on a number of fronts. I think that the Yukon government currently has a full range of tools for the identification of species at risk and for the ability to engage with the federal government in the development of management plans and the implementation of those management plans to a degree that is more than commensurate with our responsibility.

The grading exercise undertaken by the Ontario group was based primarily around whether or not we have legislation. That's the opinion of the advocacy group, but I would note that they were simply incorrect. Even their own grading system was simply just incorrect on all fronts. While I didn't agree with the grading system to begin with, even if you accept the grading system as they have it outlined, it's still grossly inaccurate.

While we do not have legislation specific to species at risk, we have various other tools to address these interests, as I've mentioned before a number of times in the House, including the significant resources invested in the management and recovery of Yukon species, specifically our wood bison, which is listed as threatened. Recovery efforts have been tremendously successful and have accumulated with the *Management Plan for the Aishihik Wood Bison Herd in Southwestern Yukon (2012)*. That's an instance where a species was identified as being at risk, or in this case, listed as threatened, and where Yukon took a management process that has seen the herd locally, or in the Yukon at least, do very well. We were able to come up with a management plan that does still include hunting as the primary management tool for that herd.

We've been very successful on a number of different fronts, and bison are one of them. Our unique initiatives in the area of caribou recovery are groundbreaking examples that others are now looking at implementing, such as northern Alberta. While not a listed species, our work on Porcupine caribou is an unprecedented success in reaching agreement among eight partners in the management of Porcupine caribou and demonstrates our ability to manage cooperatively and successfully.

We were one of the first jurisdictions to actively monitor bats and three species, two of which are in the Yukon: the little brown bat and the northern myotis. I have mentioned those species and the work done to monitor those species. Those species of bats have been subjected to an emergency assessment and have been identified as endangered.

Locally we have spent considerable time looking at colared pika and lemmings, as these are species of conservation concern in the Yukon.

With regard to the ability to identify and protect habitat in Yukon, we have an exceptional record in that sense. We have a suite of land management tools that allow us to respond to habitats that need protection or to be set aside. Of course, we have a number of very important habitat protection areas in the Yukon. They range from wetlands to marshes and lake systems that span literally thousands and thousands of square kilometres in the territory. We certainly do a good job of identifying and protecting habitat in Yukon, especially with regard to wetlands, marshes and other important wildlife habitat.

I would just like to mention some of these because I think it's important that we recognize them: Ddhaw Ghro, of course, is one that is a very large habitat protection area; Devil's Elbow and Big Island was a habitat protection area for which I had the pleasure of signing a management plan, along with the Na Cho Nyäk Dun chief earlier this year, creating a management plan for a very important habitat protection area; Horseshoe Slough is an important habitat protection area; Lewes Marsh; the Lhutsaw wetlands; the Nordenskiöld wetlands; Fishing Branch in the north Yukon is a very large habitat protection area; and especially large is the Old Crow Flats Habitat Protection Area, which spans over 7,700 square kilometres in size, which is remarkable. It's a massive wetland complex that's protected through the habitat protection area tool. Pickhandle Lake, Ta'an Kwäch'an'Tla Mun Lake and Tagish Narrows are all other examples of further habitat protection areas that in my opinion really round out the suite of habitat protection areas in the Yukon.

As I said, thousands and thousands of square kilometres of habitat protection areas exist in the Yukon — about 10,698 to be precise, which is roughly 2.2 percent of the Yukon's landmass. That's very significant and that doesn't include territorial parks, national parks or national wildlife areas like the one at the Nisutlin River.

There are a number of tools we have outside of even the habitat protection areas, which are specifically driven by habitat needs. We have a number of land management tools which are housed in the Land Services branch in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources where they can determine reserved notations or identify specific areas that need to be noted through land management. A reserve notation was recently established to assist in protecting the endangered vegetation species in Yukon, such as Yukon Draba, which of course is Yukon's favourite plant of the mustard family which exists in Yukon. In the case of Baikal sedge, which is listed as threatened, we were integrally involved in the national recovery strategy that was led by Parks Canada and have signed off on a national plan to protect that particular species.

We have also advanced an amphibian management plan that supports implementation measures related to the western toad, a nationally listed species. We are an active participant in the process of considering the listing of species at risk under COSEWIC, and we both lead and contribute to planning processes and recovery strategies for species at risk in the territory.

When we need to identify a species at risk, we have a member on COSEWIC, who represents Yukon's interests and is integral in the identification of species at risk. So we're involved at the identification level; we're involved in the planning process, and the development of recovery strategies.

Not only are we involved, but we oftentimes lead — and lead by example. The Yukon government, through the Department of Environment's conservation data centre, maintains and collects information on rare species and species of conservation concern. This information can be assessed by the public through our website and is referenced by many companies, First Nations, and other interested parties. In addition, this centre is linked to provincial, national and international databases. So when we receive reports, like the rather unfortunately worded one from Ecojustice, we don't really pay them too much heed because they don't reflect the reality in Yukon or any of the activities that are currently underway in the Yukon. They simply look very narrowly at one aspect — and that's whether or not we have legislation — and, quite frankly, I disagree with that, because it ignores some of the very important work that's being done currently by the Department of Environment at the territorial, national and even international levels.

Another important topic I should mention is the Fish and Wildlife branch — some of the projects they do. They, of course, administer programs that meet government objectives and requirements in national, provincial and territorial agreements, such as the *National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*, federal *Species at Risk Act*, and a number of other activities throughout the department. Under that project, of course, they review species at risk reports, they lead technical input from Yukon into national species assessments and coordinate and participate in management planning for Yukon species at risk by providing technical representation on national species at risk teams for key species, like Northern Mountain caribou, bison and polar bears, which are often forgotten by a number of groups when they talk about Yukon, because we do actually have a small polar bear population in Yukon as well.

As I've noted, we participate in a number of different ways to protect species at risk in Yukon, starting with habitat protection with identifying species at risk through the federal processes and through creating and developing management plans and implementing those management plans for the Yukon.

So I'm convinced that the department has the tools it needs to continue to do that good work and look forward to supporting the department as they continue to do that work.

**Ms. White:** I'd like to switch directions again and talk about the Fish and Wildlife Management Board meeting that I went to — the public consultation. I believe there were 11 changes up on the block there, and it was a great meeting.

It was chaired by someone — the Department of Environment had a bunch of initiatives going forward and the person would go up and they would present the initiative. It was open to questions from the floor so we had numerous renewable resources councils present. They had questions and were bringing

forth the opinions of their councils. We had hunters and we had trappers and we had concerned citizens.

The nature of the meeting was really positive and it felt very open and very well done, so that consultation was great. My question is in the relation to the Peel consultations that start this week, the Peel consultation that is slotted to be at the Gold Rush Inn all week — I'm wondering if it's going to be similar in nature, so it'll have a mediator, presentations and the possibility of questions; I'm just wondering if it will be the same as the most recent consultation I went to.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I would correct the member in saying that the consultation actually began several weeks ago when we launched the website, <http://peelconsultation.ca/>, which would solicit input from Yukoners on the Peel watershed planning exercise. My understanding is that the open houses to be held in a variety of communities throughout the Yukon will have staff at them to provide technical information and to assist Yukoners in understanding some of the data and information that being presented.

I don't know about the order of who speaks and when; I would have to get back to the member opposite on that one. But I know that it's intended to be very interactive and to provide folks and the general public with the opportunity to learn about what is being consulted on and to engage in a very open dialogue on what exactly is being proposed and on the information is being presented.

With regard to the Peel watershed land use plan, as I said, the website is an important tool for us to engage with Yukoners on soliciting their input on what will ultimately be the final plan for the Peel watershed area. It's a fairly interactive website that was developed with a lot of good work from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and of course with significant amount of information provided by the Department of Environment and other departments as well.

The website presents all of the data in a fairly readable form at least and a form that's fairly easy to interact with that was gathered from the final recommended plan from the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. For the most part, all the land management units remained consistent and all of the data — ecological, cultural, renewable resource and non-renewable resource values — that were gathered by the commission formed the basis of our work.

So, as I've said before and as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said before, we encourage Yukoners to engage both on the website — <http://peelconsultation.ca/> — as well as attending the open houses that the member opposite referenced. I can't remember if it's the High Country or the Gold Rush, now that she has said that, or the Westmark. I can't remember. It's in a local hotel, it's well advertised and it's available on-line. The location escapes me currently, but as I said, I encourage Yukoners to participate in that. In regard to who speaks when, I don't have that answer.

**Mr. Silver:** I'd like to just say thank you to the officials for showing up today from the Department of Environment. We appreciate his time and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has asked most of the questions that I have here, actually, so I'd like to thank her for her diligence. I only have

one extra question. It's on the Marwell tar pits reclamation at a quarter of a million dollars, I believe. I was wondering if I could get an update on this project and I'd like to ask the minister if he believes that this agreement with Canada is sufficient to complete the project.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** As I noted in this supplementary budget, there are funds dedicated to advancing the remediation of the Marwell tar pit. The funds total \$418,000 and they are needed to advance the remediation of the Marwell tar pit, the largest single-source hydrocarbon contaminated site in the Yukon. Assessment work is well underway. Once this is complete, options for remediation can be developed. As I've said previously in discussion about the Marwell tar pit, it's an interesting site. I had the chance to visit it with staff at the end of the summer, I believe, or perhaps early fall.

Despite the fact that, as I've said, it is the largest hydrocarbon-contaminated site in Yukon, it is fairly unremarkable looking. As a result of the practices many years ago — I believe in the 1960s — when it was covered over, it pretty much looks like any other industrial site, save for the fact that there are a few instances where you can see puddles of black gook — I think that is the scientific term. Liquid hydrocarbons are visible, is I suppose a better way to put it. So it is a contaminated site in that sense.

The planning agreement and the cleanup of the Marwell tar pit are part of the Yukon government's commitment to enhancing the quality of environment and will benefit present and future generations. We are now in the third full year of work on the site and doing a more in-depth site assessment, which is needed to develop remediation options. This \$6.8 million cleanup is funded 70 percent by the Government of Canada. It may provide economic opportunities for the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and for the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation, as it's in their neck of the woods.

Cleanup activities will start once the remediation plan has been approved and permits are in place. This is phase 2 of the project, which is expected to start by 2016. The Marwell tar pit site will be remediated to the standards for industrial land use as set out in Yukon's contaminated sites regulation. The Yukon government is ensuring that affected First Nations, individuals and businesses are briefed regularly about the project.

With regard to the contract itself and the agreement with Canada, when we entered into the agreement, we obviously thought that \$6.8 million was a reasonable amount of money to begin the work. To be perfectly honest about whether or not it will be enough, the answer is we don't really know. We will know once we are able to develop a remediation plan and really get our heads around what work really needs to be done to bring that site up to standard as identified by the contaminated sites regulation. As I've noted before with other contaminated sites, what is important is characterizing the contamination and determining whether or not it is likely to move or shift location or change in character.

Once we have a good understanding of that data and information, we will be able to develop the remediation plan and improve it. When sites are contaminated in Yukon, and identified under the contaminated sites regulations, the owners of the

site — and in this case, Canada — are required to do the work to develop an understanding of the site and come up with a remediation plan that is ultimately approved by the Department of Environment. In this case, the contractor who actually does the work will submit a plan to our SARU — the Site Assessment Remediation unit — and they'll determine the adequacy of the remediation plan at that time. Once we have a remediation plan, we'll know roughly what it's going to cost to implement it. Should we, at a later date, find that the original \$6.8 million isn't enough, then we would go back to Canada and indicate that to them, and look forward to reaching a subsequent agreement at a much later date. As I said, this is more than enough money to conduct the work as we see it currently, but if we learn something that we don't know already, we'll have to reassess whether or not additional funding is going to be needed.

**Ms. White:** During previous public consultations, citizen comments that were submitted to the websites were posted on the websites. Currently if you go on to the Peel consultation website and you post a comment, it doesn't go up someplace where it can be viewed by others. Will the current Peel website be changed to reflect the postings that citizens are making?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** As I've said before, we've provided a number of opportunities for Yukoners to submit their comments on the development of the Peel watershed's land use plan. We'll be conducting public open houses over the next several weeks throughout the Yukon in affected communities in a manner that's consistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. I do stand corrected on my stumbling from earlier — the public meetings are at the Gold Rush Inn, I understand. With regard to the website, the structure of the website and the current medium for input from citizens isn't planned to be changed at all.

It's our opinion that previous formats for citizen engagement have been fairly divisive and have created an atmosphere where some citizens feel intimidated by posting their comments and having the ability for places like news media or NGOs to attack them personally for their views. So we want Yukoners to be able to provide their views without the potential of being intimidated, either publicly or specifically against them individually. With regard to making it available to the public, we would, of course, at the conclusion of the process, provide a "what we heard" document, which would outline the results of the public consultation in its entirety, including input from the website, as well as open houses. Typically, what we do with those is share them with the First Nations before conducting specific First Nation consultation.

I would also be remiss if I didn't note that this is one of the longest public consultation periods in Yukon government's history. We're certainly eager to hear what the public thinks on this issue and look forward to ultimately developing a land use plan for the Peel River watershed.

As I said before, I would encourage Yukoners to participate in that process, provide their comments — either on the website or at the public open houses — and provide thoughtful

and constructive input about what is being proposed and participate in this very important process.

**Ms. White:** The consultation on oil and gas in the Whitehorse Trough originally started off as an open house setting and then it changed from an open house to more of a consultation with presentations and then recorded comments so people were able to speak, their views were recorded and then that, I imagine, was supposed to get compiled into something, but it didn't get released due to the final decision.

My question is this: if the public are not happy with an open house forum, will the government look at changing the direction of their public consultation meetings in Whitehorse and the communities?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** With regard to public consultation on the oil and gas process, I would encourage the member to direct her questions to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources upon debate of that budget. But I would note that that style of public consultation is certainly not the one we want to recreate — it was very divisive and very intimidating for folks. We've heard from a number of people who didn't want to attend simply because of the fact that it was so radicalized: photos in the paper noted people wearing paper bags on their head and shouting and chanting, so hardly conducive to a thoughtful, constructive process that allows Yukoners to provide their input without fear of intimidation from such aggressive participants.

So we want Yukoners to be able to provide their input in this process as they have in other processes, but in being consistent with past practices, would of course provide a "what we heard" document at the end of the process, not only for the public but for First Nations, as we engage with them in specific First Nation consultation.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Vote 52? We will now proceed, line by line.

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

**Chair:** Would the members like to take a break?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're going to start with line-by-line examination of Vote 52, starting on page 7-4.

**Mr. Hassard:** Excuse me, Madam Chair.

**Chair:** Mr. Hassard.

**Mr. Hassard:** I had a couple of questions I'd like to ask in general debate.

**Unanimous consent re: revisiting general debate**

**Chair:** I have a request to return to general debate. Do we have unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** We have unanimous consent.

**Mr. Hassard:** I just would like to ask the minister where we are in regard to the wolf management plan.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Thanks to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for the question. As I've noted before, the *Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan* was developed jointly by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Environment Yukon after extensive consultation. The plan addresses concerns over the management of wolves in the Yukon through a small-scale, local approach and respects roles identified in the Yukon land claims agreements.

Effective implementation of the plan will require further engagement with First Nations and renewable resources councils when developing community plans and activities. Implementation of the plan has begun and Environment Yukon has brought forward four regulation changes into the current suite of regulation changes that are before the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. Those changes include adaptive management of wolf bag limits and seasons, changes to reporting dates, and removal of the ceiling fee for wolves killed by licensed hunters. As the member knows, this was obviously an important initiative specifically for the RRC in Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council, which, after some trepidation, eventually fully supported the *Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan*, which was largely driven by the Teslin Renewable Resources Council.

As I noted previously, the wolf management plan recommends seven management goals: Conserving wolf populations in recognition of the role of wolves in ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity; managing the harvest of wolves in recognition of their social, cultural and economic importance to all Yukoners; managing wolf populations in recognition of the enjoyment and appreciation that Yukoners and visitors have in experiencing wolves in Yukon's wilderness; using wolf harvest as a management tool to reduce predation rates of moose and caribou in local areas; integrating ungulate management with wolf management goals; managing wolves to address human-wildlife conflict; promoting research education programs and information sharing to enhance understanding of wolf behaviour; and ecology and management decisions affecting wolves.

The plan replaces the 1992 plan, which was established in 1992 and is fairly antiquated. One of the important aspects of the new plan is that it recommends against the use of aerial wolf kills or using aerial killing as a tool for managing wolves.

Another important aspect of the plan is that it discusses the importance of trapping with regard to wolf management. The Yukon Trappers Association has been fairly supportive of that so far.

With regard to the implementation, it is ongoing. Four proposals for regulation changes are before the Fish and Wildlife Management Board currently. I would look forward to hearing back from that process as soon as they've completed it. As the plan notes, assisting and planning implementation will require "...ongoing collaboration and communication between the Yukon government, First Nation governments, the Inuvialuit and boards and councils with responsibilities for wolf conservation and management will be required. The implementation measures of this plan should be reviewed with appropri-

ate agencies five years after plan approval to determine if the overall goals and principles of this plan are being met."

I would look forward in five years — should I still be the Minister of Environment — to reviewing the implementation by then of this plan, but as I have noted, we are already well underway with the implementation of a few of the recommendations and look forward to implementing a number of other ones, including, I would note, recognizing the important roles of renewable resources councils in establishing bylaws in accordance with the process established under Yukon First Nation final agreements and the related implementation plans.

Another one is that the Yukon will consider retaining responsibility for issuing Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna — CITES — permits, and input into the completion of the non-detrimental findings. We'll also continue to collect and share traditional local scientific knowledge on wolf numbers, ecology, and predator-prey ecosystems in areas where there have been collaborative decisions about management priorities, specifically traditional and local knowledge should be gathered and shared. Scientific knowledge will continue to be gathered and needs to be communicated in plain language and should be made easily accessible. We'll continue to provide input into land use planning and environmental assessment processes to protect known dens and mitigate disturbances to wolves during the period of pup rearing.

I would encourage the member to review the plan — if he has specific concerns, I would be happy to address them at a later date. As I have said, we have been fairly successful so far in bringing forward recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and having them present to the public a number of recommendations for amendments to the regulations, as per their process.

**Mr. Hassard:** In regard to bison permits, I'm curious, as I'm sure many people are: What has been the general response, and has it made any difference to how many permits are sold with the lowering of the price from \$50 to \$10?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** With regard to the impact on the permits, because we are currently in-season, we won't know until the end of the season whether or not it did have an impact. I would note that anecdotally I've heard very positive response from those wishing to hunt bison this winter. The change in the seal fee is a small one — a small change from \$50 to \$10 — but it is welcome by hunters who do enjoy getting out and participating in that hunt.

By reducing the fee, this really has a small impact on the recovery of dollars through that seal fee, but it does have a fairly large impact on encouraging members of the public to get out and participate in what is a very culturally relevant and historically important process of hunting bison. Since bison were introduced to the Yukon, they have been hunted a fair amount and Yukoners have really come around to bison as a species that they enjoy hunting for the purposes of food, as well as the actual act of hunting itself.

Despite the fact that we lowered the seal fee and are maintaining hunting as the primary tool for management of the bi-

son herd, these are all still consistent with the management of a species that is nationally recognized as being at risk, so in this case we are able to have a hunt on a population like this, which I would note in the report from Ecojustice that I referenced earlier today — they noted that, without prohibiting the hunting of species at risk, we were simply not doing our duty essentially.

I would note that that's just another example of how irrelevant that sort of assessment is, because it doesn't recognize local considerations and local management tools in determining whether or not we've been successful in managing the species.

To answer the member's question: Yes, we have received positive feedback on the lowering of the seal fee, but unfortunately, I don't have any data at this time about what effect it has had on the number of permits that have gone out because of the fact that the season is still ongoing. I'd be happy to report back to him either verbally or by way of letter at the conclusion of the bison season to convey to him that data.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'll be looking forward to that. I just had one other question: What national initiatives, if any, are you working on in regard to air quality?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I see that the member has reviewed this supplementary budget and my comments on it. He'll note that \$20,000 under the environmental sustainability area, which is a total of \$146,000, is being sought for nine activities, including one in particular that he'll find interesting, which is the preliminary work to develop an air-quality management system in keeping with the Government of Yukon's commitment at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment meeting in October to support this Canada-wide initiative. As I noted, this is something that came out of the CCME's work. I had a chance to attend the CCME meeting in Banff earlier this year, which was my first meeting with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. It was a very productive one and the establishment of a new air-quality management system is part of a national effort to reduce the amount of smog in Canadian air.

This initiative involved federal, provincial and territorial Environment ministers and in this we're taking further action to protect the health of Canadians and the environment, with measures to improve air quality in Canada through a comprehensive new air-quality management system, or AQMS, which is a flexible approach to implementation that will assist jurisdictions to ensure good air-quality outcomes while maintaining competitiveness in all regions of Canada.

While there was some vigorous debate from a number of different jurisdictions about this, we were ultimately able to come to an agreement on it.

We were ultimately able to come to an agreement on it, despite the fact that jurisdictions like Nova Scotia — who has fairly recently built very large-scale coal electricity plants and felt that they may be adversely affected by this initiative — were able to come to agreement on the system. The system includes standards to set the bar for outdoor air-quality management across the country, industrial emissions requirements that set a base level of performance for major industries in

Canada, a framework for air-zone management within provinces and territories that enables action tailored to specific sources of air emissions in a given area, regional air sheds that facilitate coordinated action where air pollution crosses a border, and an intergovernmental working group to improve collaboration and develop a plan to reduce emissions for the transportation sector.

In Yukon, we actually have a fairly interesting air shed. It's a part of three different national ones — the west coast, the north, and, primarily down in the southeastern Yukon east of Watson Lake, is a part of the prairie air shed.

We will determine what air zone Yukon needs to participate in this system, but it's likely that it will only need one air zone, probably around Whitehorse, because that is where the significant amount of industrial activity would be located that might trigger action by government.

I think it's also worth noting that at CCME we also signed the new national air pollution agreement with Canada for our local monitoring station here in Whitehorse. It's a fairly unique system here in Whitehorse where Canada provides the equipment and we provide the staffing to do the monitoring. So right here in Whitehorse we have the facilities and technology to monitor air quality in Whitehorse, which as I said is really the Yukon's most likely source of air pollution. Once again, that's a unique scenario where the federal government provides the machinery and the technology and we provide the staffing and the human resources.

As well, under that system, governments agreed on a new standard under the AQMS for fine particulate matter and ozone, which are the two main components of smog.

Work has also begun on new standards for sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, which are significant components of air pollution.

Jurisdictions, with the exception of Quebec, have agreed to begin implementing the AQMS, subject to further jurisdictional approvals. Although Quebec supports the general objectives of the AQMS, it opted not to implement the system since it includes federal industrial emission requirements that duplicate Quebec's clean air regulation. As we have certainly become aware, the change in government in Quebec has led them to resist with a new fervour any action by the federal government that they perceive to be an intrusion on the provincial realm of power.

However, Quebec will collaborate with jurisdictions on developing other elements of the system, notably air zones and air sheds. Ministers, myself included, will continue to work together to finalize all elements of the AQMS. Industrial emission requirements have been agreed to for some sectors, including cement and base metals melting, among others. Outstanding industrial emission requirements for sectors such as petroleum refining, coal-fired electricity generation, reciprocating engines and volatile organic compounds, better known as VOCs, will be addressed through a continuing collaborative process. A flexible approach to implementation will recognize current measures being undertaken by jurisdictions, particularly for existing facilities.



The AQMS will include monitoring and reporting of outdoor air quality conditions and emissions from major industrial sources in Canada. The system also recognizes the substantial contributions that stakeholders and communities can make to improve air quality. In addition, the AQMS will enable Canada to work more effectively with the United States to reduce cross-border flow of pollution that is a contributor to air quality problems in several regions in Canada, notably not necessarily the Yukon. We've been fairly lucky in dealing with air pollution issues with Alaska, and certainly haven't had the kind of challenges that are being felt in other regions of Canada, especially any of the provinces on the southern border with the United States — especially those in the east who have significant industrial activity happening right near or in close proximity to the border, which sees a significant amount of cross-border pollution which is, as we've noted, very difficult to manage. So I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for his question.

As you'll see, we're very active on national fronts to improve the management of air quality in Canada and we're working at the territorial level to work within that framework. He'll see in this supplementary budget \$20,000 for the preliminary work to develop that AQMS that I mentioned and to continue to engage with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment on a number of different fronts, which I would be happy to discuss with members at a later date.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate? We will now proceed with line-by-line examination of Vote 52, starting on page 7-4.

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

***On Corporate Services***

***Corporate Services in the amount of \$585,000 agreed to***

***On Environmental Sustainability***

***Environmental Sustainability in the amount of \$146,000 agreed to***

***On Environmental Liabilities and Remediation***

***Environmental Liabilities and Remediation in the amount of \$571,000 agreed to***

***On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance***

***Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared***

***Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,302,000 agreed to***

**Chair:** Moving on to capital.

***On Capital Expenditures***

***On Corporate Services***

***On Information Systems, Equipment and Furniture***

***On Yukon Environment Information System***

***Yukon Environment Information System in the amount of \$11,000 agreed to***

***On Operational Equipment***

***Operational Equipment in the amount of \$68,000 agreed to***

***On Lands and Facilities***

***On Capital Maintenance and Upgrades***

***Capital Maintenance and Upgrades in the amount of \$14,000 agreed to***

***On Tombstone Park Interpretive Centre***

***Tombstone Park Interpretive Centre in the amount of \$10,000 agreed to***

***On Swan Haven Erosion Mitigation***

***Swan Haven Erosion Mitigation in the amount of \$81,000 agreed to***

***On Claims Implementation and Aboriginal Affairs***

***On Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA)***

***Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) in the amount of \$60,000 agreed to***

***On Environmental Sustainability***

***On Parks***

***On Five Fingers Rapids Recreational Site***

***Five Fingers Rapids Recreational Site in the amount of \$54,000 agreed to***

***On Total of Other Capital***

***Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared***

***Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$298,000 agreed to***

***On Revenues***

**Chair:** Are there any questions on revenues?

**Revenues cleared**

**Chair:** That brings us to the end of Vote 52.

We're going to carry on with Vote 51, Department of Community Services. Would the minister care for a 10-minute break to change officials?

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

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

***Recess***

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

We're going to resume general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services. Ms. Taylor has the floor, with 10 minutes, 36 seconds remaining.

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

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would just like to extend a welcome to the officials from Community Services for joining us here today in the Legislature. I believe where we left off was a discussion about land development and, of course, when it comes to land development Community Services plays a very major role in facilitating discussions and preparing plans and working with the municipalities and many other stakeholders throughout the territory in bringing to fruition residential lots for all Yukoners throughout the territory.

In this year's budget we have just over \$35 million allotted for residential land developments and, as I referenced earlier, we have actually, over the past three years alone, invested more than \$100 million in total in projects that have resulted in well over 500 building lots throughout the Yukon. We're really pleased to be able to continue to work with the City of Whitehorse, for example, when it comes to Whitehorse Copper, Mount Sima, Ingram, Burns Road, Willow Acres country residential and, of course, more recently, the Whistle Bend land

development — that in itself, in all eight phases of its entirety will result in by far the largest residential subdivision that Yukon has ever embarked upon.

A significant amount of infrastructure is required to bring Whistle Bend to fruition. It includes roadwork, underground deep and shallow utilities, the waste-water pump station, a water recirculation pump station, Range Road water main extension, and the Valleyview water reservoir expansion.

There is a whole host of respective infrastructure — to the tune of around \$70 million alone in support of the Whistle Bend land development.

We're very pleased to see significant progress. Of course, earlier this year, we were very pleased to be able to release the first phase of lots in Whistle Bend. For the first time in many years, we are also very pleased to actually have lots made available over the counter, not just within Whitehorse, but many communities as well. As I mentioned, we have developments — working with the communities of Haines Junction, Destruction Bay and, of course, more recently, with Grizzly Valley, and we will continue to work with the communities of Watson Lake and the community of Mayo.

As well, there are planning dollars allotted within this year's overall budget for those particular pieces of land development to go forward. It is very important because we've seen significant growth in the population over the years and significant demand for all sorts of land to be made available — commercial, industrial and residential. We have been working to that end.

As I mentioned the other day, we plan to work toward bringing more than 1,600 new lots to the market in the many years ahead. Primarily, that's in Whitehorse, but also, thanks to planning dollars and planning efforts being made underway for lots in other communities, including Dawson City, Watson, Mayo, and so forth. We are very confident that these planned investments will help to address the wider issues of supply and affordability of housing in the territory.

We are also very pleased to be able to contain within the supplementary budget that we are talking to today the ongoing, long-term and long range plans to help with forecasting demand for lots by community and overall in the territory.

We are pleased to include an increase of about \$347,000 to continue our work on a territory-wide land inventory and planning project, and a number of feasibility assessments with the City of Whitehorse for potential projects throughout the city. It is an initiative that we have been working on over the past year and will certainly carry on. We have been working with individual communities, which will help inform our department and the Government of Yukon with an overall land development plan for the Yukon. It will look at a 20-year planning horizon window to support a land development process and the revisions to our policies and processes related to land supply and land development.

Through the Minister of Justice, there is a land development modernization project that is currently underway and will be for the next years to come. It is part of the government's overall housing platform to be able to streamline and make land as efficient and affordable as possible, but also to modernize

and update the way we deliver land and work with all of our partners to be able to deliver land.

Again, all this work will very much help with the anticipated land development issues in each of our communities and it will also help map out a more robust and more responsive land development model for the territory. It will establish more effective demand forecasting for our communities, which is something we continue to hear time and time again when visiting our communities, looking for that ongoing plan of development — instead of waiting for developments to occur, to come and go, but establishing that longer term vision for land development. It will also help develop a reliable decision-making tool for determining that land supply throughout the territory.

Those are just some of the efforts. I think it was just last month we were very pleased to also continue our partnership with Habitat for Humanity Yukon. This is a collaborative, unique partnership in making land available in support of home ownership for families who would not necessarily be eligible for home ownership through the conventional forms of financing made available.

So we are pleased to announce last year our commitment to donate land in each of the phases of Whistle Bend for Habitat for Humanity to make housing available, the first of which was identified and officially presented or handed off to Habitat for Humanity just last month by the Yukon Housing Corporation. So we're very pleased to build on that unique and collaborative partnership with an organization. It's just another example of how we are working creatively to make land available and expanding the housing options available for all Yukoners.

**Mr. Barr:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome the officials from Community Services and thank you again for your hard work. I just have a couple of questions and maybe comments before we move into line-by-line.

I was speaking to a couple of the LAC chairs over the weekend. Since we spoke in the House last week, there seemed to be some confusion around civic addressing from some of the comments that were made at recent LACs in the last few weeks to a response by the minister that was given regarding civic addressing.

Where the confusion lies is that at the meeting it was stated that there were monies in the budget — and it wouldn't be in the supplementary — that would allow for signage and the civic addressing to move forward and, as stated last week, this might be in the way of a possible pilot project. So in speaking with the chairs, and from their information that was at the LAC's meeting at Marsh Lake last Thursday, there are unanswered questions. Is there money to complete this project, then, in unincorporated communities for civic addressing or is there only going to be a civic address pilot project, and with whom would that be? Each one of the communities in the Southern Lakes is interested, so how is that going to be determined? Who would receive it if that's the case?

Also, in regard to the 200 comments in the *Landlord and Tenant Act* review, seeing that we do not know when the *Resi-*

*dential Landlord and Tenant Act* will be called, as it is the responsibility of the House Leader — we haven't received those yet and we would like some time to look at those, seeing that it could be called tomorrow, for example. As the minister has stated that this will be forthcoming, would the minister please get that to us? Today would be great. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As I tried to explain, as best as I was able, last week on the civic addressing — as I mentioned the other day, the department has and will continue to provide that financial assistance. It will continue to make available that assistance with respect to house numbers, of course, and signage for communities. We have been doing that for over a period of 10 years now. Just to be very clear, we have actually been making some progress on this, but rest assured there is more work to be done. There always is and there always will be.

As was articulated during the LAC forum, which I was very honoured to attend, there was an item that specifically addressed this initiative.

What was agreed to at the end of those discussions was really, in order to come to an agreement as to who goes first, how that unfolds and where those resources go, we need to work on a workplan to identify that timeline and to identify those priorities. As the member opposite would know full well, there are some communities that perhaps are more ready and willing and perhaps able to move on this particular area. There may be other communities, where it's not at the top of their priority list for a whole host of reasons. Again, what we have committed to as a department is to work with the communities over the course of the next few months and to be able to report next spring this workplan that will provide some added direction as to how we get there. It will also provide that formality, in terms of planning — instead of more or less, perhaps on an ad hoc basis, but really provide that template for moving forward. Hopefully that provides some clarity.

With respect to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, as I mentioned to the member opposite, we will have those comments. I'm hoping by this week that we'll have those comments for posting on our Community Services website so we're able to proceed with debate in short order.

**Mr. Barr:** By saying "next spring", does that mean this spring or the following? Just for clarity, that would be helpful. I'm right to assume then that we will receive those comments before the debate.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** With respect to the workplan, for clarity for the member opposite, it is spring 2013, so the following spring. As I thought I committed to on the floor of the Legislature, but I'll recommit again: we will in fact have the comments posted on the website prior to debate on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Community Services?

We will proceed then with line-by-line examination starting on page 3-4.

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

***On Protective Services***

***Protective Services in the amount of \$1,674,000 agreed to***

***On Community Development***

***Community Development in the amount of \$1,129,000 agreed to***

***On Consumer Services and Infrastructure Development***

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to add that this pertains to the new residential tenancy office that our government announced. So this goes hand-in-hand with the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and it really is the initial start-up dollars for getting the office up and running, for starting to hire the personnel and so that we're able to be prepared for the launch of the office with public education materials and, of course, hiring a full staff to be able to be ready when the act and the regulations come to fruition.

***Consumer Services and Infrastructure Development in the amount of \$61,000 agreed to***

***On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance***

***Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared***

***On Total Operation and Maintenance***

***Total Operation and Maintenance in the amount of \$2,864,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

***On Corporate Services***

***On Information Technology Equipment and Systems***

***Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$68,000 agreed to***

***On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space***

***Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$115,000 agreed to***

***On Protective Services***

***On Fire Marshal***

***On Major Facility Maintenance***

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just wanted to add that this will probably be of great importance to the member opposite for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. That \$84,000 increase is a revote of the Mount Lorne fire hall expansion to the current year. They are doing some fine work and I congratulate them on this initiative.

**Mr. Barr:** I was touring that facility and while I was there for their AGM for their new fire chief and deputy fire chief and so on, it was stated that this maintenance work was done. We looked at it; it was great. Also, it was put forward in the briefing that with this money, the leaks from the tanks that have been put upstairs in the added part still need to be found, and I would ask the member opposite to ensure that this does get solved.

I would just bring to your attention that it is ongoing and there have been some attempts, but it's just constant water leaking.

**Chair:** Is there any further debate?

***Major Facility Maintenance in the amount of \$84,000 agreed to***

***On Fire Protection***

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just again wanted to point out that there is a series of new investments housed within the supplementary. This is part of the increase that we had the privilege of announcing earlier this spring over at Golden Horn Fire De-

partment. It has to do with the additional investment in the Fire Marshal's Office. Specifically this line item has to do with the structural — the addition of a fire truck over and above the one that has already been provided in the mains. It also includes additional firefighter protective equipment, as per occupational health and safety standards as well; another good news item.

*Fire Protection in the amount of \$409,000 agreed to*

*On Fire Management*

*Fire Management in the amount of \$174,000 agreed to*

*On Emergency Medical Services*

*On Whitehorse Ambulance Station Replacement*

**Mr. Barr:** Could the minister opposite please explain this amount?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Chair, we have an increase of approximately \$32,000 as a revote of the project funding from last fiscal year to the current fiscal year and an additional \$779,000 is an increase in the total project cost as a result of added design requirements and, again, the project tender having come in at higher than estimated. Unfortunately, we didn't get to talk about this during general debate, but this is a very welcome addition within the City of Whitehorse and will certainly enhance the response times to residences throughout the city, is much needed and will build on the facility already operating at the hospital.

*Whitehorse Ambulance Station Replacement in the amount of \$811,000 agreed to*

**On Community Development**

*On Sport and Recreation*

*On Dawson City Recreation Centre*

*Dawson City Recreation Centre underexpenditure in the amount of \$435,000 cleared*

*On Ross River Recreation Centre*

*Ross River Recreation Centre underexpenditure in the amount of \$5,500,000 cleared*

*On Community Operations*

*On Sewage Treatment and Disposal – Destruction Bay Septic Field*

*Sewage Treatment and Disposal – Destruction Bay Septic Field in the amount of \$350,000 agreed to*

*On Roads, Bridges and Streets Upgrade*

*Roads, Bridges and Streets Upgrade underexpenditure in the amount of \$70,000 cleared*

*On Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated Community Infrastructure Projects*

*Rural Municipalities/Unincorporated Community Infrastructure Projects in the amount of \$175,000 agreed to*

*On Capital Asset Management and Reporting*

*Capital Asset Management and Reporting in the amount of \$440,000 agreed to*

**On Consumer Services and Infrastructure Development**

*On Community Infrastructure*

*On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Watson Lake Lakeview Water and Sewer*

*Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Watson Lake Lakeview Water and Sewer in the amount of \$45,000 agreed to*

*On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Canada Games Centre Waste Heat Recovery*

*Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Canada Games Centre Waste Heat Recovery in the amount of \$205,000 agreed to*

*On Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation Geothermal*

*Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Projects — Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation Geothermal in the amount of \$336,000 agreed to*

*On Building Canada Fund*

*On Beaver Creek — Road Upgrades*

**Mr. Barr:** Could I get some clarity on this item?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As I articulated in my opening remarks, this is one in a series of initiatives of capital projects that have proceeded much quicker than anticipated.

*Beaver Creek — Road Upgrades in the amount of \$400,000 agreed to*

*On Burwash — Grave and Sedata Roads Improvements*

*Burwash — Grave and Sedata Roads Improvements in the amount of \$350,000 agreed to*

*On Burwash — Well Head Protection*

**Mr. Barr:** Yes, I would like to know what the increase is for.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, it's one of those projects that is proceeding more quickly than anticipated. So it's not an additional cost; it's just being advanced quicker.

*Burwash — Well Head Protection in the amount of \$735,000 agreed to*

*On Carcross — Water Treatment System Upgrade*

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to just confirm if this is a revote or an increase, and is that project on time?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** So, again like the others the member opposite has raised, it's really an advancement and not an increase to the overall. So it's just moving quicker than anticipated.

*Carcross — Water Treatment System Upgrade in the amount of \$939,000 agreed to*

*On Carmacks — Sewage Treatment and Wastewater Collection*

*Carmacks — Sewage Treatment and Wastewater Collection in the amount of \$57,000 agreed to*

*On Carmacks — Road Upgrades/ Resurfacing*

*Carmacks — Road Upgrades/ Resurfacing in the amount of \$800,000 agreed to*

*On Dawson City — Sewage Treatment and District Heating*

*Dawson City — Sewage Treatment and District Heating in the amount of \$1,035,000 agreed to*

*On Destruction Bay — Repairs to Sanitary Collection System*

*Destruction Bay — Repairs to Sanitary Collection System underexpenditure in the amount of \$200,000 cleared*

*On Faro — Water and Sewer Pipe Replacement*

*Faro — Water and Sewer Pipe Replacement in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to*

*On Haines Junction — Water Reservoir and Pump System*

*Haines Junction — Water Reservoir and Pump System underexpenditure in the amount of \$4,130,000 cleared*

*On Haines Junction — Arsenic Removal and Water Treatment*

*Haines Junction — Arsenic Removal and Water Treatment in the amount of \$2,133,000 agreed to*

*On Mayo — Water, Sewer, and Road Upgrades*

**Mr. Tredger:** Could I get a breakdown and explanation, please?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As I understand, this and the following line item of \$284,000 have been deferred to the following fiscal year.

**Mr. Tredger:** Do we know why that has been deferred or any further information?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I don't have that readily available at my fingertips.

*Mayo — Water, Sewer, and Road Upgrades underexpenditure in the amount of \$1,987,000 cleared*

*On Mayo — New Community Well and Treatment*

*Mayo — New Community Well and Treatment underexpenditure in the amount of \$284,000 cleared*

*On Old Crow — Road Upgrades*

*Old Crow — Road Upgrades in the amount of \$18,000 agreed to*

*On Old Crow — Solid Waste Facility Upgrades*

**Mr. Barr:** I would just ask why this has been removed.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** This was attributed to more work being completed last fiscal year on the project than anticipated, lowering the costs required for this fiscal year.

*Old Crow — Solid Waste Facility Upgrades underexpenditure in the amount of \$340,000 cleared*

*On Old Crow — Water Supply Upgrade*

*Old Crow — Water Supply Upgrade in the amount of \$917,000 agreed to*

*On Pelly Crossing — Road Upgrades*

**Mr. Tredger:** I just wondered if that project is finished, or will more be allocated in the next budget year?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Like many others we have been discussing today and the other day, this is one of those projects that is really an advancement. It's not an additional increase because it's proceeding much quicker than anticipated.

*Pelly Crossing — Road Upgrades in the amount of \$525,000 agreed to*

*On Ross River — Arsenic Treatment and Systems Upgrade*

*Ross River — Arsenic Treatment and Systems Upgrade underexpenditure in the amount of \$56,000 cleared*

*On Ross River — Community Roads Upgrade*

*Ross River — Community Roads Upgrade in the amount of \$555,000 agreed to*

*On Ross River — Public Works Building*

*Ross River — Public Works Building underexpenditure in the amount of \$463,000 cleared*

*On Tagish — Taku Subdivision Fill Point*

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to know if that is the same reason, that the work is done and sooner, and also at this Taku

subdivision fill point, was there a water softener filter installed? I know it had been a request of the community.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** With respect to this specific question, as one can appreciate, this is one of many projects. I think our budget is almost \$200 million, of which half of that is capital projects. So I can't provide the member opposite with an answer on the water softener. With respect to this project, the reason there is a decrease is because it has been deferred to the next fiscal year.

**Mr. Barr:** I just would like then to ask the minister opposite to get back to me with that information.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'm sure that when we get to next fiscal year in the budget, thereafter we'll be able to talk about that.

**Mr. Barr:** My original question: Is this money that is not being spent — why? Is it because the work is done ahead? And if the work is done ahead, has that water softener been installed? I believe that the residents don't want to wait a year. Could you ask someone in your department to proceed with that information sooner, please?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** We'll certainly endeavour to look into the member opposite's request. As I mentioned before, it's a project that has been deferred to the next fiscal year, so there will be more information to articulate when we get into the next fiscal year as well. Given the member opposite's support of this, I would anticipate that we will receive his unanimous consent on the supplementary budget as well.

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to know when — and seeing that there has already been money spent, maybe this has already been done with the money that has been spent.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** This hopefully will be the third time lucky here. This money is actually for design planning money, so that design planning money has been advanced to the next fiscal year. What I'm trying to say as clearly as I can is that we should have more information to report in the next fiscal year, which is not long from now.

**Mr. Barr:** "Design" would have been an important word in the first response and that would have been helpful. Thank you.

*Tagish — Taku Subdivision Fill Point underexpenditure in the amount of \$550,000 cleared*

*On Teslin — Road and Drainage Upgrades*

*Teslin — Road and Drainage Upgrades in the amount of \$37,000 agreed to*

*On Teslin — Arsenic Treatment*

*Teslin — Arsenic Treatment in the amount of \$2,098,000 agreed to*

*On Teslin — Teslin Tlingit Council Road Upgrades*

*Teslin — Teslin Tlingit Council Road Upgrades in the amount of \$500,000 agreed to*

*On Watson Lake — Water and Sewer Pipe Replacement and Wet Well*

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just wanted to report that this is another example of Building Canada hard at work, and thanks to the good work of the community of Watson Lake and the MLA for Watson Lake for advancing this project as well. It is one of a series of phases associated with modernizing water

and sewer in the Town of Watson Lake and of course this is one of many projects throughout the territory that we are getting at.

*Watson Lake — Water and Sewer Pipe Replacement and Wet Well in the amount of \$3,608,000 agreed to*

*On Whitehorse (and area) — Marwell Water and Sewer Upgrades*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Cathers 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**

**Ms. McLeod:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 7, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** 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 stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

#### **The following Sessional Papers were tabled November 19, 2012:**

33-1-52

Yukon Development Corporation 2011 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements (Cathers)

33-1-53

Yukon Energy Corporation 2011 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements (Cathers)

#### **The following document was filed November 19, 2012:**

33-1-27

Bill C-400: An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians, letter re: (undated) from Marie-Claude Morin, MP for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, to Hon. Scott Kent, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation (White)