



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Tuesday, November 18, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
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Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 18, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Before we start, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 767, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Leckie Award and Yukon Chamber of Mines award winners

Hon. Mr. Kent: Today I rise to pay tribute to the 2014 Robert E. Leckie Award winners as well as two companies that received community award recognition from the Yukon Chamber of Mines at last night's annual Geoscience awards banquet.

The Leckie Award was created in 1999 as a tribute to Robert E. Leckie, a mining inspector from Mayo who passed away in November of that year. Robert was an innovator who promoted planned reclamation, research and cooperation that benefited government, industry and the people of the Yukon. The award acknowledges quartz and placer mining companies that demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship, outstanding social responsibility, leadership and innovation in mining practices.

The nominees for the 2014 Leckie Award for quartz mining were Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd., Chevron Canada Resources, GroundTruth Exploration Ltd., Kaminak Gold Corporation, Minto Exploration Ltd. and Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation.

The Leckie Award for responsible and innovative exploration and mining practices in quartz mining was awarded to GroundTruth Exploration Inc. GroundTruth Exploration places a huge priority on developing exploration methods that cause minimal impact. They have developed a number of state-of-the-art technologies such as a flying drone to capture baseline data on claims, and a lightweight rubber-track vehicle called a Geoprobe that can traverse land without impact or the need for trail construction. The company has also developed new drilling technology called rotary air blast drilling, which requires no water, no drill pad or helipad. These are just a few examples of the ways that GroundTruth Exploration Inc. is innovating mining techniques across the territory.

The Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship in quartz mining was awarded to Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation. The Sa Dena Hes mine is a historic lead zinc mine 45 kilometres north of Watson Lake in the traditional territory of the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council. It has been under care and maintenance by Teck, who purchased the site in 1994, two years after operations shut down. Teck is the managing partner of Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation and has been working closely with LFN and the RRDC to understand the site's historic use and the ways the First Nations would like to use the site post-closure.

Teck is recognized for a number of achievements, including the design of an innovative risk-assessment framework to improve the site decommissioning plan, the removal of the mill and camp and reclamation of the waste rock storage, tailings management facilities and all mining entrances. This is an extremely important project for the Yukon. It demonstrates how previous operating mines can be responsibly closed and decommissioned in a way that protects the land, respects First Nations' wishes, and prevents costs from being assumed by the public.

This year's Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship in placer mining was awarded to Fell-Hawk Placers. Fell-Hawk Placers operated on Ballarat Creek in the Dawson mining district until 2013. Throughout the life of this operation, the company adhered to extremely high operational standards. This was demonstrated in a number of areas, including water-conveyance structures, new road and trails, camp construction and the final decommissioning of the site.

The Fellers family undertook tremendous planning and foresight in order to accomplish the high level of reclamation that was completed on Ballarat Creek.

An honourable mention for excellence in environmental stewardship this year in quartz mining goes out to Chevron Canada Resources. Chevron has spent three years rehabilitating the Crest iron-ore lease at Snake River in the Peel region. They removed debris and completed remediation on 705 cubic metres of soil that was impacted by mining that took place over 50 years ago. Chevron utilized thermal technology that is more efficient in northern climates, spending approximately \$9 million to complete this work.

This year's winner and nominees have demonstrated exemplary work in the fields of reclamation, remediation and innovation. This high standard of work reflects the level of commitment and dedication shown by all of Yukon's mining companies to responsible mineral development and environmental protection.

The Chamber of Mines also made two awards at last night's banquet, and I would like to at this time mention the recipients. Kaminak Gold Corporation received an award for their commitment to the community. I know the chairman of the board of Kaminak was on hand for the award, and he brought up his entire team that is here in the Yukon, including some young people from Dawson City who are working on that project.

Casino Mining Corporation also won a community award from the Yukon Chamber of Mines for their dedication to the community, but specifically for their project this summer where they brought salmon into the communities to provide to the elders, given the voluntary fishing ban those First Nations put on the Yukon River this year.

So a big congratulations goes to all the winners. I would like to introduce a few of the people who are here in the audience. From GroundTruth Exploration Inc., we have President Isaac Fage and Tao Henderson, the vice-president, who have joined us here today. From Sa Dena Hes Teck, we have Gerry Murdoch and John Pugh from AMEC, who was the construction engineer on that project.

Although they're not with us, Will and Melanie Fellers from Fell-Hawk Placers came down and attended and accepted the awards on behalf of their mining company last night. I would just ask members to join me in welcoming our guests and congratulating them for their excellent work.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: I rise to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Official Opposition to the recipients for excellence in mining practices and the Robert E. Leckie Awards.

Rob Leckie was a mining inspector in the Mayo district office. He had a passion for the environment and a good understanding of the need for a strong Yukon economy. As the Mayo region mining inspector, he sought to find practical solutions to the difficult issues surrounding sustainable development in the 1990s. He was a forward thinker who worked closely with the prospectors, the miners and the government officials during a time when people may have been polarized. He was responsible for bringing in scientists to research in the Mayo area, which helped bring about practical, sustainable solutions to the issues facing the new demands on reclamation work being done in mining and, in particular, placer mining. Bob Leckie was known to be a consensus-builder and he recognized the value of having all parties in the conversation.

Last night in the awards banquet, in conjunction with the Yukon Geoscience Forum, was a showcase of achievements, challenges, hopes, and projects of our minerals economy — a collaboration of industry and government. It was a gathering of businessmen and businesswomen, innovators, citizens, and entrepreneurs who so obviously love their work and are committed to the Yukon.

Thank you to the Yukon Chamber of Mines for organizing and hosting the awards and the banquet. I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for their commitment to responsible mining in the Yukon — in particular, those individuals and companies who received awards last night for their environmental stewardship for the responsible and innovative exploration in mining practices, for their ingenuity and, most of all, for their engagement of local communities. GroundTruth Exploration, Fell-Hawk Placers, Kaminak Gold Corporation, Casino Mining Corporation, Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation and

the Yukon Chamber of Mines — those companies and individuals that the minister has acknowledged. These individuals, companies and organizations exemplify and represent the mining industry at its best — their vision and, perhaps most importantly, their commitment and belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon, especially for their commitment to the Yukon. To you and all of your colleagues, congratulations — you are helping to build Yukon's future.

Mr. Silver: I also want to voice my congratulations to the companies and individuals that have won awards over the week, especially prospectors of the year, Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton — and again for those great stories that they had last night at the banquet — and also the Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship for the Sa Dena Hes Corporation — absolutely. But I just want to have a personal moment here for some of the Dawson winners of these awards. First off, the Fellers family name — not just Will and Mel, but the whole family has been a cornerstone in the placer mining community of Dawson for decades.

Will and Mel specifically are not only excellent and conscientious miners, but they are also extremely involved in the community. They are excellent neighbours and they are good people. I do want to warn you, though, Mr. Speaker, that if you are in Dawson on one of those rare nights when Mel makes an appearance at the poker table at Gertie's, do not sit down because she will take your money.

I have watched the GroundTruth crew continue ever since they began, at their inception, and their evolution since their inception. There have been many of Isaac's dirt-baggers camped out on my lawn over many summer months and into the winters, using my shower on the odd days that they were actually in town. I have seen many of his workers also fall in love with our community and with the town, and grow roots in different occupations after their employment with Isaac. I have also seen a lot of my ex-students and other locals benefit from his leadership and from his employment. From the beginning, Isaac's goal was always more than just personal gain. To Isaac, it is about family, it is about community and it is about the environment.

Tao Henderson — the minute that Tao moved to town, everybody loved him. I don't know how he did it but he managed to get the respect of everybody in the community from a really early, early time. That's a hard thing to do in Dawson. I believe that it is his positive attitude and it is also his amazing work ethic. I remember the night that Tao came to my house for a beer, because he was asking all of his friends what they thought of this new partnership idea that Shawn Ryan and Cathy Wood were offering him in exploration — and this speaks to his character because one of the biggest hurdles was, even though he stood to gain very much for his family through this opportunity, he had started working for the City of Dawson just a short time before and he was very, very worried about letting his co-workers down.

So after much soul-searching, Tao took on the offer and Talus Exploration was born — and we're extremely grateful

that he did. Working in tandem with Isaac Fage and with his team at GroundTruth, this partnership was a key economic driver in Dawson's exploration boom of a few short years ago. After the boom, the companies merged and continued to revolutionize the industry.

Now I won't bother going into detail with that, because I believe the minister did a great job of summing up the reasons why they won their award. But I just want to personally say a big thank you to both Tao Henderson and to Isaac Fage for their work in the industry. You are the future of the industry and that's something that your community is extremely proud of.

Thank you.

In recognition of Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame inductees Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton

Ms. McLeod: It's my great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton. They were inducted last night into the Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame. The Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding achievement by individual prospectors who worked against great odds to make significant discoveries. Often a single discovery is a life's work, but in this case, these two men, with their team, discovered three significant deposits in the Yukon.

Ed was born in Three Lakes, Saskatchewan and earned a diploma in mining engineering technology from Northern College, Haileybury School of Mines in 1970. After graduation, he worked for Cordilleran Engineering Ltd. as a geological technician, prospector and field manager until 1995 throughout B.C., Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

From 1996 to 2007, Ed worked for Fairfield Minerals and Almaden Minerals on projects throughout the cordillera straight down to Mexico.

Ed still prospects for various companies working in the Yukon and northern B.C., but these days, thankfully for him, it's more on his own schedule.

Mike Hamilton was born in North Carolina and graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in geological engineering in 1969. He joined Cordilleran Engineering in 1970 and worked on exploration projects primarily in the Yukon. He headed south in 1978, working with Wesley Mines Ltd. in Nevada on projects, including the Santa Fe mine in Mineral County. He moved on to work with Franco-Nevada Corporation before retiring in Boulder, Colorado.

While working for Cordilleran Engineering, Mike and Ed played key roles in the discovery of the Goss creek deposit northeast of Mayo in 1973, and the Logtung deposit between Swift and Morley rivers in 1976. Ed then led the team that discovered the Logan deposit northwest of Watson Lake in 1973.

During this period, Ed and his Cordilleran team also discovered the Silvertip deposit near Rancheria in northern B.C. and lead-zinc deposits at Gainer River in the Northwest Territories and Robb Lake in northeastern B.C.

While this tribute is to Ed and Mike in recognition of their individual efforts and accomplishments, it's also a tribute

to Cordilleran Engineering, a company that made an outsize contribution to mineral discovery in the Yukon. Mike Hamilton could not be with us today, but Ed is, and I would like to invite members to join me in welcoming Ed today.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming my fiancée Brittany McNeil and our daughter London Haley Dixon.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I would like to invite people to help me welcome Judy St. Amand. Judy has been the driving force behind the Leckie Awards and making sure that that is all coordinated and we thank her very much.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I would like the House to welcome a constituent of mine, Mr. Werner Rhein, a long-time volunteer in the community of Mount Lorne and just all-around great guy.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to require a mandatory remedial program for all impaired driving offenders, including drivers with graduated driver's licences who receive a roadside suspension for impaired driving.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain the details for the Klondike palaeontology centre, as mentioned in the Minister of Tourism and Culture's fall 2014 budget response.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release the numbers of local employees, to date, from the F.H. Collins reconstruction site, including subcontractors.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD**Question re: Securities regulation**

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this government has been in negotiations with the federal government regarding the possibility of Yukon joining a national securities regulator. Currently, Yukon exercises the right to regulate securities.

B.C., Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and P.E.I. have all agreed to a more streamlined regulator. However, Alberta and Quebec, who represent 40 percent of Canada's securities market, are both holding out, citing concerns about the impact a national regulator would have on their ability to tailor securities regulation to their own jurisdiction.

Yukon has enjoyed the benefits of a territorial securities regulator. Does this government support Yukon's inclusion in a national securities regulator?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, the Yukon government is currently assessing and considering two security regulatory options, one of which encompasses an agreement to form the cooperative capital market regulatory system which was developed by the federal government, British Columbia and Ontario. Jurisdictions that have signed on to that include Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. The other option is being led by Alberta and Quebec, which is intended to enhance the existing securities passport model that has been in operation at this time. Yukon is currently reviewing both models and will consider and balance the interest of all stakeholders before we make a decision.

Ms. Hanson: It is interesting to note that one of the Yukon programs that could be affected by joining a national securities regulator is the Yukon small business investment tax credit. Established over 25 years ago by an NDP government, this credit has benefited businesses — such as Air North, which used it to raise capital on a number of occasions.

Generally, an investment tax credit requires a prospectus, an expensive procedure that would prevent Yukon's small businesses from taking advantage of the tax credit. However, because we have a Yukon regulator, Yukon businesses have been granted an exemption. Joining a national securities regulator could put at risk tax incentives like the small business investment tax credit, which have been shown to benefit Yukon businesses and keep money in Yukon.

Will the minister give this House assurances that regardless of the choice this government makes, unique Yukon programs like the small business investment tax credit will be protected?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I can inform the member of is that, in fact, as I noted, we are considering both models. We need to recognize that nationally change in how securities have been regulated is coming, whichever model is put into place or if both are in operation.

We are working closely with other jurisdictions and considering the benefits and potential risks and costs associated with each of the models. One of the interests that we have identified to those who have formed the single regulator model — those being Ontario, British Columbia and the federal government as the lead three jurisdictions on that

— indeed one of our priorities that we would like to see addressed within that is flexibility for local business incentive programs.

But we need to recognize that there are many issues at play, including the fact that the system by which corporations engage in securities — if the Yukon has a system that is at odds with what the rest of the country is doing, we may simply not see the benefit of registrations that we currently do, because we are a relatively small market. Again, we need to work closely with other provinces and the federal government, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms. Hanson: I think the minister may be on the right track, Mr. Speaker, so I just want to clarify that, because, as part of a government, it is important that we make sure that we are hearing and articulating the unique circumstances. We know that, from a business standpoint in the Yukon, there are potential negative impacts on Yukon's securities market, businesses and economies if we join, unchecked, a national securities regulator.

We do know that Yukon's business climate is unique. We have seen it again demonstrated this past weekend and throughout this last year. There is a very real chance that a national securities regulator, run out of Bay Street, may not be able to or may not be willing to adequately understand and reflect the unique needs of Yukon's business community.

What is important here is to know that this government and to have this government commit to Yukoners that they will not support a national securities regulator if there are no guarantees that Yukon's unique local business context can be respected and understood.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted in my previous response, the flexibility for local business development programs is one of the interests and priorities that Yukon government has identified. We do recognize, first of all, that change is coming in how securities are regulated across the country. It's important to ensure that we're not left alone in not moving forward.

There are again two different options that have been developed and proposed. We are assessing both of them — the single national regulator, which has been proposed by Ontario, British Columbia and the federal government. At this point, the provinces of Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have also signed on to this CCMR system. The alternative option, led by Alberta and Quebec, has been proposed to enhance the existing passport model.

Again, we're working to assess both and recognize that in fact with the changes that will come with either model, there will be some benefits and some downsides to doing so, but as a very small player in this area, it's important that we be aligned with other jurisdictions and have the opportunity to see the continued strong registry of corporations operating in the Yukon and not be left as an anomaly in the country, not participating in either system.

Question re: Drinking and driving

Mr. Barr: Motor vehicle accidents are an important public health issue because they are the leading cause of death

among youth. Young people are less likely to drive impaired than an adult driver, but the youth who do drive under the influence are at a very high risk of collision. The RCMP does a great job of enforcing and addressing drinking and driving. However, government needs to do a better job of educating youth so they choose to not drive while impaired or be a passenger in a vehicle with an impaired driver.

Is the minister willing to take any further measure to prevent impaired driving among new drivers?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: If the member opposite had paid attention to the Red Ribbon campaign, he would know that we are working with Mothers Against Drunk Driving locally as well as COPS — Citizens on Patrol — and the RCMP. He is right that the RCMP do a phenomenal job, but our community working together with MADD and COPS and the citizens of Yukon reporting instances of alleged or suspected drunk driving is certainly key. This is a community responsibility and this government continues to work with the community.

Mr. Barr: We are aware of what the government is doing. We would seek more.

Yesterday, I noted that some Canadian jurisdictions have a zero blood-alcohol requirement for all drivers until age 21. Mothers Against Drunk Driving also recommends the zero blood-alcohol requirement for drivers under 21 and for drivers with less than five years' driving experience. MADD Canada also urges governments to address drug-impaired driving by prohibiting drivers under age 21 and drivers during the first five years of getting their licence from being positive for drugs.

Will the minister support the good work of MADD Canada and consider making these legislative changes to better address impaired driving?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm not sure if the member opposite is just not listening or failing to reflect the information that we have provided. This government works hand in hand with organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the RCMP, COPS — I know the Minister of Education — there's IMPACT, which is a program that is run through the school systems. This government takes this very seriously.

In fact, I was at the MADD Canada conference in Toronto just a couple of months ago receiving a citizen of distinction award for the important work that this government has done with MADD and MADD Canada. We will continue to work with those community members. I urge the member opposite to pay attention.

Mr. Barr: The minister deserved an accolade, but we are looking for something to prevent deaths — not the *Fatal Accidents Act* that was put forward.

The minister's words of praise for the RCMP and Mothers Against Drunk Driving is not supported by government action. The track record of Yukon is very poor, according to provincial and territorial legislative review by MADD. The review indicates that the Government of Yukon needs to enact major reforms to its licensing provisions, short-term administrative licence suspensions, remedial programs and the vehicle impoundment and forfeiture programs. Will

the minister turn his words into action and follow MADD's recommendations to broaden police powers and strengthen the administrative sanctions for drivers who violate the graduated licence program?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again we see another clear example of the member opposite not paying attention. The member opposite may know — I will let him know now — that we have run programs with MADD through graduations. There have been social media programs. I commend the partnerships that we have had with, just for example, the Department of Education and the Department of Highways and Public Works. This government takes drinking and driving very seriously. We urge all Yukoners, if they see or suspect someone of drinking and driving — the member opposite doesn't seem to think that this is a community issue. It is a community issue, and it is going to take a community response, not just a government response, to address this.

If the member opposite would please pay attention to the social media programs, the graduation programs, the programs offered through Education, through the Department of Justice, and the RCMP then he might know that this government is working very hard on this matter and we will continue to work with our community.

Question re: Dawson City waste-water facility

Mr. Silver: I'm going to return to a topic of great concern to my constituents. The Government of Yukon announced it was transferring the ownership of the Dawson waste-water treatment facility to Dawson City earlier this year. The transfer was supposed to happen mid-March. This didn't happen. The samples taken at the time failed to pass the water quality test. The contractor who built the facility was supposed to operate it for one year and then turn it over to the city. Yukoners are well-aware that the \$25-million plant has not operated properly since it has opened.

Can the minister confirm the hand-off to the City of Dawson has not in fact occurred because the plant still isn't working properly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I indicated previously in Question Period, in fact, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works are working closely with the City of Dawson. We are committed to continuing to do our utmost to holding Corix, the contractor, to the terms of their contract and ensuring that they do what they committed to in that contract, which is deliver a plant that meets the terms of the contract and meets the needs of the City of Dawson.

As I have indicated previously, we have committed to continuing to work with Dawson in that regard to ensure that we are fully supporting and assisting them in doing what is necessary to have that plant operating as it is required to do by the contract.

Mr. Silver: With all due respect, we heard the same thing from the minister last week. His quote was, "...holding Corix to the terms of the contract and are doing everything within our power to ensure that the plant performs as it is supposed to." What's the long-term plan for this facility? It

hasn't operated since it opened in October 2012. The City of Dawson is well within its rights of refusing to take over the responsibility for this facility and the government is currently left indefinitely holding the bag. Can the minister explain why the plant isn't working? Is it a mechanical problem, for example, or a design flaw or some anticipated reason like higher-than-anticipated mineralization of the water?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question and I thank my fellow colleague for his first answer.

The Dawson waste-water treatment plant is essential to a clean environment and a healthy sustainable future for the community of Dawson. We know how we got to this situation. They pleaded guilty. We're here and helpful and we're partnering with the City of Dawson to address the core infrastructure priority. Highways and Public Works and Community Services now has been communicating and consulting with the Dawson residents on this project for about six years. We've had a lot of meetings.

Corix, the design/builder of the plant, has hired several Yukon and Dawson subcontractors and three local Dawson residents as part of this operation, which has provided a bit of an economic driver for the City of Dawson. The Dawson waste-water treatment plant is more than a robust compact and environmentally appropriate system. It's an innovative milestone project that takes work — this technology — to find it a better way to meet the critical infrastructure requirements that will meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Corix has been operating the plant for more than two years. We're working with the City of Dawson — my fellow colleague and I — through this process while we work with Corix and the City of Dawson to make this plant operational.

Mr. Silver: This innovative project, as he is explaining, doesn't work. It hasn't worked since it began. We've heard the briefing notes before but it's clear that the white elephant is that the new waste-water treatment facility is going to cost Yukon taxpayers for years to come.

Last week, the minister seemed to indicate that it was the contractor's fault — and we heard it again today — that the system is not working. Okay. Interestingly, the Yukon Party government of the day went out of its way to disqualify a Yukon company so that Corix was the winning bidder. Two years after the plant opened, the government is now blaming its hand-picked contractor for a facility that does not work and which may never actually work.

How long does the government intend to let this situation continue before it takes real action against the contractor?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would point out that the Leader of the Liberal Party should know that he made a misstatement of fact in suggesting that the government hand-picked a contractor and he really deserves the employees of the Department of Highways and Public Works and Community Services an apology for his assertion.

I would point out again, we are fully committed to holding Corix to the terms of their contract, and I would again remind the member that a mechanical treatment plant was not the Government of Yukon's preference or the City of

Dawson's preference. As a result of the decision by the citizens of Dawson — their request, as stated through a plebiscite, that objected to located a conventional sewage lagoon as a treatment option, we then had to go to plan B to respect the wishes of the citizens of Dawson. Mechanical treatment plants are more complex. They have more issues in commissioning than a sewage lagoon, but we are respecting what the citizens of Dawson asked us and the town of the City of Dawson to do.

We're working closely with the City of Dawson and are doing our utmost to fully hold Corix to the terms of their contract and ensure that they deliver on what they committed to do.

Question re: Veterans' disability pensions

Ms. White: Veterans' disability pensions are meant to compensate for injuries sustained while on duty and to help veterans meet their daily expenses and the often extraordinary costs associated with their injuries. Having raised this issue several times in this House, I was thrilled to hear this morning that Yukon Housing Corporation's new rent-assessment process will no longer include veterans' disability pensions as income when assessing applications for social housing.

That this government has now recognized that veterans' disability pensions are tax-free and not an income replacement for the purposes of rent calculation is an incredible first step.

Will the Premier now change policies that amount to clawing back veterans' disabilities pensions when it comes to applying for other supports and services of the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: All of us in the House certainly applaud and recognize the commitment that is made by Canada's veterans. Mr. Speaker, you and our Minister of Highways and Public Works are included in that list. We've just recently gone through Remembrance Week and most of us participated in ceremonies here in this territory and, in fact, record numbers of people across this country took time to pause to reflect and thank members.

This government is very proud of the assistance that we provide to all Yukoners in need. That is a priority for this government. We can talk about the huge increases in funding that this government has done over the last number of years to provide assistance to those people in need. That's what we'll continue to do: ensure that this government is here to provide assistance to all Yukoners who are in need.

Ms. White: I thank the Premier for his acknowledgement for veterans in words, but what I'm looking for are actions. Sadly, it has taken too long for this government to recognize that veterans' disability pensions should work to support veterans, rather than count against them — a principle that has been validated at the federal level and the Supreme Court of Canada. No veteran should ever have to live in poverty as a result of their service to our country. Let's not wait for court decisions to determine what is right for Yukon veterans.

Will this government update the *Social Assistance Act* to recognize that veterans' disability pensions are a payment for pain and suffering, are tax free according to the Canada

Revenue Agency and should be exempt when determining eligibility for assistance?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm confused at how the member opposite is implying that — poverty and service together. What I will say is that this government has in the past and will continue in the future to ensure that all Yukoners who are in need — we'll provide the service and the funding that they require. When we look across this country, the supports that are provided here in Yukon are very favourable compared to almost all jurisdictions across the country, Mr. Speaker.

This government will continue to honour all veterans and support all Yukoners in need.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Mr. Tredger: I was glad to hear last week about a \$1.4-million investment to support Yukon College's cold climate innovation work. The work the college does in this regard is remarkable. For example, they recently helped Northwestel use solar energy at a remote microwave station to reduce their costs and their environmental footprint.

Other jurisdictions, like Alaska, are leading the way on alternative energy through projects like Kodiak Island. Meanwhile, our visionary wind energy plans fell apart in the early 2000s. We have gone from innovative leadership to sitting at the back of the pack. We need a renewable energy strategy that picks up the ball.

When will the government table a renewable energy strategy that shifts Yukon's dependence off of fossil fuels like natural gas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I have mentioned a number of times on the floor of this Legislature, we are very proud of our plans for renewable energy. Of course, the long-term anchor for that is our work on next-generation hydro. We continue to invest in and develop the existing hydro facilities that we have as well. Members know, of course, of the two windmills that are up on Haeckel Hill. There have been studies on Ferry Hill near Stewart Crossing for potential wind energy. As early as this morning in conversations with the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation, we will be moving that wind-monitoring equipment to Mount Sumanik here in Whitehorse as well to gauge the viability of wind.

Mr. Speaker, I should at this time mention though that we did let members of the House know that over the weekend, we did have some icing problems at the hydro facility here in Whitehorse, which led to the closure of those specific hydro facilities. The fossil fuel backup that we have came into play. It kept Yukoners warm; it kept businesses operating while repairs were made to the hydro facilities.

I have mentioned a number of times that it's a very small portion of the energy puzzle that we have here in the territory — that backup of fossil fuel — but it sure is an important one.

Mr. Tredger: This weekend might have been a perfect time to have hydro — or rather, wind power as the backup, as it was the wind.

The microgeneration and independent power production policies enable Yukoners to invest in renewable energy, but when will this government show leadership and do the same?

Like many other jurisdictions, we need to put in place a long-term strategy that aggressively guides the territory toward a competitive, renewable energy future. After all, we are the land of the midnight sun.

Solar energy is a unique opportunity for the government to take action to reduce Yukoners' energy footprint. We have already seen the difference it can make, thanks to projects like the Northwestel remote stations, and we know that solar energy is a positive step forward for the Yukon. We have seen leadership on the solar energy development in the private sector. How will this government follow suit?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite referenced the potential this past weekend for wind to have been one of the energies that would provide what the demand would have required but, of course, for most of this past week, it wasn't that windy either. I looked up on Haeckel Hill and the two wind turbines weren't turning on the weekend either. Again, that reliable backup energy system is extremely important to the Yukon and to the safety of Yukoners, and to the businesses that operate here in the territory.

When it comes to renewable power, the member opposite referenced the microgeneration program that we have as well as opportunities in early 2015 with the independent power producers policy. Solar energy is something that is used currently in Old Crow. They have a number of photovoltaic cells on buildings feeding solar energy into the community grid.

The costs are high for solar energy. Developing technologies may soon make solar a more affordable option for Yukoners, but we need to have an informed conversation when it comes to renewable energy and we need to ensure that the costs are reasonable and that we can continue to provide the quality of electrical generation for Yukoners that they have come to expect.

Mr. Tredger: Many jurisdictions have shown that the costs are reasonable and very competitive. Yukoners need leadership on renewable energy. It is about the political will to support renewable energy. A narrow-minded focus on non-renewable resources whose price will increase over time may seem pennywise, but we can only be sure of our long-term energy security when we diversify our sources of renewable power technology like solar and wind energy. We know which side Yukoners are on, Mr. Speaker. It is the side of renewable energy and sustainability.

When can Yukoners expect this government to show the same determination developing solar and wind energy as they do plowing forward on their oil and gas agenda?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my first response, the long-term anchor to our renewable or clean power strategy is of course the next-generation hydro. We issued a directive to the Yukon Development Corporation to begin planning on that. There are a number of workshops that will be hosted by consultants starting later on this month. I believe next week is actually the first workshop with respect to the next-gen hydro.

I mentioned the wind monitoring that has occurred at Ferry Hill near Stewart Crossing and the monitoring equipment that is being moved down to Mount Sumanik here

close to Whitehorse to look at the opportunities there. I mentioned that solar is an expensive form of power, but it may be something that becomes a more affordable option for Yukoners in the future.

When it comes to backup generation and using fossil fuels to meet our peak demand, I thought we made a breakthrough with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun earlier this week in debate when he actually admitted that at his remote cabin or home that he owns that he uses diesel to generate power when the sun is not shining and perhaps the wind is not blowing. If it's that important for him there, he has to recognize that on an isolated grid here in the Yukon, we need that reliable power to ensure that Yukoners are safe and that our businesses can continue to operate.

Question re: Air quality in government buildings

Ms. White: On April 11, 2014, the Yukon Housing Corporation held a tenant meeting to address air quality issues that have over the years been of concern to Closeleigh Manor residents. One of the documents provided to those in attendance was a Closeleigh Manor ventilation system report by Northern Climate Engineering. This third-party report includes nine recommendations to help improve air quality at both Closeleigh Manor and the two government offices housed in the complex: the Film and Sound Commission and the Commissioner's Office.

Will the minister tell this House which of the recommendations have been completed to date, and when will all of the recommendations be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note is that in the 2014-15 capital budget, we provided \$250,000 to Yukon Housing Corporation to upgrade the ventilation system in the Closeleigh Manor residence. I don't know the exact status of that work. I can look into it for the member opposite, but it is a corporation that is accountable to government and reports to me, but I'm not involved in the day-to-day operational details of when work that has been put into the budget is performed and when it's underway unless I specifically request, as I will do in this case.

Ms. White: We know the Yukon Housing Corporation understands the critical importance of ensuring residents of Closeleigh Manor can breathe air that will not endanger their or their loved ones' health and well-being. This is why Yukon Housing Corporation has taken several initial steps to address indoor air quality concerns at the complex. However, the need to complete all recommendations grows more urgent as we head into another winter heating season. Can the minister confirm whether or not the Closeleigh Manor chimney currently meets code and, if it does not currently meet code, can the minister tell us when it will meet those health and safety standards?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the importance of the matter, but the level of detail the member is referring to — I don't have an update on the status of the work. I know that what we were asked for by Yukon Housing Corporation and provided was \$250,000 to take action including moving the building's air intake, extending the chimney, cleaning the

ventilation system and replacing components of the existing air exchange system. As I indicated in my previous response, I will happily undertake to get an update on the status of that work for the member opposite.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his response. The Yukon Housing Corporation recently put out a public tender for balancing the ventilation system at Closeleigh Manor. This will help address the identified ventilation system problems. However, as of 2012, Alberta environmental public health reports notes state that approximately 50 percent of residential indoor air quality investigations do not lead to identification of the source or contaminant in subsequent complaint resolution. It is critical that indoor air quality be tested following completion of all recommended improvements of Closeleigh Manor. This indoor air sampling, if done through a certified technician and tested in an accredited facility, would ensure that the hard work of the Yukon Housing Corporation is validated and, most importantly, support resident's health and well-being.

Will the minister commit to having indoor air quality samples gathered by a certified technician and analyzed in an accredited testing facility once all the recommendations are completed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note for the member is that, in fact, Yukon Housing Corporation is a corporation that is run under a governing board. I will certainly commit to passing on the member's suggestion to the board and staff, but that level of detail is not something that would be appropriate for me to operationally direct. I am confident, though, that if the staff and board feel that there are additional resources required to conduct any additional testing that they deem is appropriate, they will certainly let me know and we will, of course, do whatever is necessary to address any needs in this area. I do have confidence in the board and staff that if additional testing is necessary they will ensure that appropriate action is taken, and I'll pass on the member's suggestion to them for their consideration.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. Stick: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. They are Motion No. 774, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 775, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 19, 2014: Motion No. 729, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 80: *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 80, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It gives me pleasure to rise here today for third reading of Bill No. 80, the *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*. I would like to begin by thanking members for their positive comments regarding this legislation yesterday.

I would also like to just note — particularly in light of a matter that came up earlier today in this Assembly — that in fact, this legislation does allow people who are connected to the electrical power grid to access the rural electrification program to put in their own home renewable energy systems. While the title of the bill focuses on the amendments to enable the rural well program to be extended within participating municipalities, this legislation, once passed, would also provide increased stability for people to fund renewable energy systems through borrowing money under the rural electrification program.

The other provisions of that program would apply. It would allow people who are connected to the electrical grid currently to borrow money to put in a home renewable energy system and would allow them to potentially take advantage of the microgeneration program that we implemented earlier this year, which provides people with a premium rate for producing and adding renewable energy to the grid from their home, which is currently 21 cents per kilowatt hour within the hydro portion of the grid and 30 cents per kilowatt hour for people who are in diesel communities.

That, again, is another part of what our government is doing to further support the expansion of Yukon's renewable electricity production and also provide people an increased ability to provide the power needs of their home.

In speaking to third reading of Bill No. 80, the *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, I would just note in recapping that the legislation amends both the *Assessment and Taxation Act* and *Municipal Act*. It provides a mechanism to extend the successful domestic water well program into participating Yukon municipalities. The costs of loaning money under the program would be borne by the Yukon government — pardon me, the upfront costs. The program continues to be 100-percent recoverable from property owners. The loans are paid through a local improvement charge that is added to a property owner's annual tax notice

and the loan is then repaid over five, 10 or 15 years, as decided by the property owner.

The legislation here would again provide for the ability of the rural well program, which has been in place since 2004, to be extended into participating municipalities. The rural water well program — as of March 31, 2014, 240 projects had been covered under this program, meaning roughly 240 families have been assisted through this program, which loans people money to develop a well or to upgrade an existing water well.

At the request of municipalities who, in our consultation with them this year, asked for the ability to add a fee to help compensate them for administration of the program. The structure of this legislation does allow for a fee to be added on to the amount property owners within municipalities would have to pay. The exact amount of that fee would be a subject of agreements between the Yukon government and municipalities who sign on to the program. I would also note that that fee is going solely to municipalities for their administration. The Yukon government is not adding an administration fee on to this. We are maintaining the same structure for residents within municipalities, as has been in place for the last 10 years for Yukoners outside municipalities.

For those who are not familiar with the structure, I should also note that the reason for the structure of the program — the reason that it requires an amendment to legislation — is that levying a local improvement charge on someone's property can only be done by the government as the taxation authority for the area. That means the Yukon government has the ability to do it outside municipalities, but incorporated municipalities are the only ones that can levy a local improvement charge within their boundaries.

What this legislation, once passed, will do is provide for the ability that if municipalities sign on and agree to allow us to offer this program within their boundaries, they will also be required to agree that they will put a local improvement charge on the property of anyone who successfully applies into the program and they would agree to recover that amount loaned through a local improvement charge and remit to the Yukon government the annual payments under the loan.

The program, as I noted, was originally designed to give rural Yukoners access to low-interest loans to drill water wells on their property or enhance existing wells. It was modelled at its inception after the long-standing rural electrification program. A central part of both programs is the principle that government assists people in upgrading their personal infrastructure associated with their home and property, but the money is a repayable loan. A caveat is put in place and the local improvement charge is applied through regulation to their property, and that is to provide security for repayment of these loans and ensure that public money and taxpayers' money is repaid under the program. Both programs have been very successful in doing exactly that.

In addition to the 240 projects that have been completed as of the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year, an additional 20 projects are currently underway in this fiscal year. As I noted earlier in my remarks, Yukon government contacted Yukon's municipalities this year to propose expansion of the successful

and popular well program to residents within municipal boundaries. We proposed four possible options to municipalities and the option presented in the legislation before this House is the one that was the preferred option of municipalities.

The program does give municipalities the choice of opting in and opting out of the program, should they choose to at any point in time. This is, we believe, a very good deal for Yukon municipalities and for Yukoners within any participating municipalities as the bulk of the administration of the program and the costs of the program are borne by the Yukon government. The investment does allow people to not only access clean drinking water, but adds to the value of their property which consequently adds to the total tax base within the municipality.

With that, I will not go on at great length in speaking to this as I provided most of those remarks yesterday at second reading and Committee of the Whole. I would just close by thanking members for their positive remarks and commending this legislation to the House.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party Official Opposition to speak to Bill No. 80, *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*.

As I was saying yesterday, we are happy to support this act. Although we realize the changes are overdue, it is welcome to the people of the Yukon who will be affected by this. As the minister had noted, the inclusion of adding home renewable energy systems, whether you're adding or upgrading existing systems, is welcome news.

The act also highlights the need for better water quality reporting. As more wells are drilled in rural municipal subdivisions, it's critical that we have good data on watercourses, water quality and flow, water used by residents, businesses or industry and the locations of the wells themselves. As we spoke, this will all be looked at as we move forward.

It's also important to note that it's essential that safety is paramount where contamination could occur and the water is not being tapped out by concentrations of high-use domestic water wells. Our hope is that the government will move to enact this legislation in a speedy manner and give us a clear timeline on how it plans to implement the act, including negotiations with the city.

We hope that this legislation can be in place and effect by next summer, so that Yukoners can take advantage of this great program. With that, I turn over remarks to whoever is next.

Mr. Silver: I rise to speak to Bill No. 80 in third reading, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*. As I said yesterday, the rural water well program has been helpful to many Yukon residents and I'm happy to see it will be expanded to include municipalities, as I think the expansion of the program is long overdue. I hope most municipalities will opt in to allow their residents to take advantage of the program. I want to thank the minister for

bringing forth this bill, and also to the officials of the department for their help working on. I think this amendment is a much-needed addition to the program and I will be voting in favour of it.

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank members for their support for this. As I mentioned earlier when speaking to this, I would also like to thank and acknowledge colleagues of mine, including the Member for Watson Lake, the Member for Kluane and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, for their support of expanding this program to benefit their constituents. I would like to thank municipalities for their participation in this consultation and the interest we have received from municipalities in signing on to this program that will provide a beneficial service to citizens living within municipalities.

I would echo comments from other members in hoping that municipalities do choose to sign on. As I noted earlier, municipalities, because of respect for their taxation authority, do have the ability to sign on to the program and choose to opt out at a later date. We are hopeful that they will sign on and continue to offer the program and, at the direct request of municipalities, we agreed to add on an administrative fee in municipalities for property owners. That will be added to the amount that property owners will have to borrow. We have indicated our preference and suggestion that that fee should be kept low. We have suggested that it might be a charge of up to \$500, but the exact details will be negotiated directly with municipalities, while we will continue to emphasize to administrations and councils that, if we do go higher than that \$500 fee, it will be a direct increase cost to the property owner and a higher amount that they have to pay under the program compared to what other Yukoners outside of municipal boundaries have to pay.

I thank the members for their support of this program and am hopeful that municipalities will choose to sign on to this great opportunity for citizens living within municipal borders. I will close and commend this legislation to the House.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 80 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 80 has passed this House.

Bill No. 81: Court Security Act — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 81, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The *Court Security Act*, Bill No. 81, puts existing court security practices into legislation. Yukon is the only jurisdiction without legislation governing court security and this bill will bring Yukon in line with the rest of Canada. Our government is committed to ensuring a safe, effective and efficient justice system, and this new legislation will provide more safety assurances for all court users and enhance court security operations in Yukon courts.

A few years ago, Yukon's judiciary identified that a court security act would create greater certainty and clarity around aspects of court security. Although the judiciary have inherent jurisdiction over their courtrooms through common law, it has not been clear whether this authority extends outside the courtrooms and to other areas where threats to security may arise — for example, the parking lot. Other jurisdictions in Canada have found that, without designating court areas and establishing explicit authority in legislation for security practices, such as sheriffs screening for prohibited items or evicting people with cause, the ability to enforce prohibitions or actions is compromised and would be subject to challenges.

Having the parameters of court security rules in legislation makes rules more clear and it makes it more effective. Many people, whether they be witnesses, accused, jurors or courtworkers, go to court because they are required to; therefore, it is the responsibility of the justice system to maintain safe court premises and to have consistent security rules and practices.

This legislation will define what are designated court areas, including outside the courtroom like interview rooms,

common areas, building entrances and exits at the Whitehorse Law Centre, but also with buildings that are used in the communities for circuit court. It will also allow for security officers to screen people before they enter court areas and to deny entry to those who are either carrying a prohibited item or refuse to be screened.

The sheriff will similarly be allowed to evict a person who is creating a disturbance or found to be carrying a prohibited item. This legislation will prohibit unauthorized recordings by camera, cellphone, recording device or other equipment and will allow the sheriff to seize the equipment and destroy the recording and/or remove the person who is making that recording.

It will also provide clear authority for sheriffs to assist RCMP in carrying out searches of people held in court cells. Sometimes when there are no RCMP officers present, the sheriffs are required to search persons before they can be safely held in court cells. Furthermore, female sheriffs are sometimes called upon to assist when a female is in custody and must be searched and no female RCMP officer is present. These practices will now be explicitly authorized.

Similar to our neighbours in the Northwest Territories, the legislation will also enable penalties for persons who contravene this act. Persons may be liable on a summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is committed to access to high quality justice services. The new *Court Security Act* will clarify court security practices and it will ensure consistency throughout the territory. The new act will formalize current security practices by clearly outlining them in legislation, which will increase public confidence in Yukon's justice system.

I thank the judiciary for their comments through this entire process. Providing the courts and our sheriffs with the tools necessary to carry out their day-to-day operations as well as those utilizing the courts is so very important. On another note, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the legislative drafters in the Department of Justice for working on this piece of legislation and so many others. Their work is very important to each and every one of us in this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Moorcroft: As I said yesterday in debate at second reading, the NDP Official Opposition supports Bill No. 81, the *Court Security Act*. This bill formalizes many security procedures that are already in effect in Yukon courtrooms, whether the law courts in Whitehorse or the facilities used in our rural communities for court proceedings.

We support the work of the Sheriff's Office and the court security officers. We recognize the need to bring Yukon's court security legislation and regulations up to date and in line with other jurisdictions.

As I noted at second reading, we support the principles of an open court. As Madam Justice Wilson of the Supreme Court of Canada said, "The public interest in open trials and the ability of the press to provide complete reports of what

takes place in the courtroom is rooted in the need ... to provide an ongoing opportunity for the community learn how the justice system operates and how the law being applied daily in the courts affects them". So bearing that in mind, we do not want to unduly restrict the public's ability to observe court proceedings. New security measures must respect Canadian values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

This bill was brought forward after an extensive security audit of court buildings, which was done six years ago, and requests from the judiciary for court security legislation in Yukon that brings it in line with other jurisdictions. We understand the *Court Security Act* was prompted by cumulative issues and events, including the 2008-09 court buildings security audit.

We're pleased to support the *Court Security Act*.

Mr. Silver: I rise to speak to Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*. As I said yesterday, this bill is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. I think these proposed changes will increase the court's ability to maintain order and streamline court proceedings. The changes will allow greater authority for our court security officers to deal with disturbances and other problems in Yukon's courts and will address newer technology.

As I had stated yesterday as well, it is surprising to see how many of these items are not already part of Yukon's court procedures. I thank the minister for putting this forward and for the officials from his department for working on it, and I will be supporting the bill in third reading today.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?
Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 81 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 81 has passed this House.

Bill No. 76: Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 76, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. This bill is primarily administrative so I will keep my comments brief.

The bill has three primary objectives: first, it broadens the types of fuels used for exempt activities to all fuel oil as defined in the current legislation; second, it provides a mechanism for suspension or cancellation of permits, licences and emblems; and third, it updates some provisions related to fines and penalties for offences and non-compliance under this act. The bill also contains a variety of minor housekeeping provisions.

The current *Fuel Oil Tax Act* is substantially unchanged from its original 1960s version. The act exempts certain activities consuming fuel oil from being taxed, such as heating buildings. The act also allows permit holders tax-free consumption of diesel or gasoline for certain exempt activities, such as generating electricity, mining, farming, et cetera.

This bill provides consistency between tax treatments of broadly exempt activities and the exempt activities requiring permits by standardizing the tax base to fuel oil and not specific types of fuel oil. It is the activity and not the type of fuel by policy that is exempt from tax. There is no impact on the Government of Yukon's fiscal framework with this legislation.

The bill also contains provisions allowing the minister to suspend or cancel permits, licences, or emblems with cause. Permits and licences are privileges and are not a right. The ability to suspend or to cancel these privileges for cause is consistent with many other acts that provide for permits and licences. This authority will also reduce the risk to Yukon that could arise from non-compliance of permit holders.

Finally, this bill increases the maximum fine for an offence under this act from \$1,000 to \$7,500 to adjust for the impact of inflation. The bill also enables a penalty of \$100 to be imposed for non-compliance when no tax amounts are due.

These changes, while administrative and therefore housekeeping in nature, will enable an improvement in the administration of the *Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Ms. Hanson: I will say at the outset that although I appreciated the attempt by the Department of Finance officials in their briefing to do their best efforts to make Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, riveting, it's really quite dry. I will say at the outset that the Official Opposition will be supporting these updates to, as the minister opposite has indicated, very outdated legislation.

Although, as I said, we do support in principle, I will have some questions for Committee of the Whole, keeping in mind that, as the minister identified that these are largely — I would say, the intent is administrative in nature — I will ask for clarification as we do go line by line in Committee of the Whole because there are a number of questions that did arise during the course of that briefing that really are subject to questions as opposed to a statement about the intent of the legislation.

Mr. Silver: It's a pleasure to rise to Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. As mentioned, this act is administrative in nature, so I don't have a lot to say on it. Updating the terminology will modernize and streamline processes for the applicants and prevent loopholes in the legislation and will accommodate for the changes in our fuel use here in the Yukon. The amendments also highlights that our legislation now is changing to accommodate the common use of LNG in the territory. I would like to thank the minister for bringing forth this bill today and the department staff also for working on this bill. As it stands, I will be intending to support this bill.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 76 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the committee is general debate on Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 76: *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's my pleasure again to speak to Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. I'm pleased to be joined by my deputy minister of Finance for Committee of the Whole.

The current *Fuel Oil Tax Act*, as I have said, has remained very much unchanged from its original 1960s version. The act exempts certain activities consuming fuel oil from being taxed, such as for heating buildings. The act also allows permit holders tax-free consumption of diesel or gasoline for certain activities, such as generating electricity, mining, farming and golfing as well.

In the 1960s, diesel and gasoline were the only practical fuel sources for most of the exempt activities. With changing technology enabling new fuel sources, it makes sense to update the legislation to reflect all the options available for exempt activities.

Also, many of the provinces in the 1960s administered their exempt fuel sales by way of colouring — dying fuel — colour-dye fuel. I remember those days of purple gas on the farm in Saskatchewan. Yukon never implemented a similar regime, most likely due to the lack of scale required to justify industry duplicating resources in the local fuel market.

Therefore, this act simply replaces reference to diesel and gasoline to the more generic definition of "fuel oil". The bill also contains provisions allowing the minister to suspend or cancel permits, licences and emblems, with cause. This authority is fairly standard in most legislation, allowing for activities by way of permit or licence — a driver's licence is an example.

Finally, there has been inflation since the 1960s, and this bill increases the maximum fine for an offence under this act from \$1,000 to \$7,500 to adjust for the impact of inflation. The bill also enables a penalty of \$100 to be imposed for non-compliance when no tax amounts are due.

I would like to also thank the department for their work in putting this bill forward, and I'm proud to present it to the committee in the House here today and I look forward to some debate on it.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his comments and the official for his presence here today — and, as I had mentioned at second reading, for his and his colleagues' best efforts to help the members on this side of the House go through this legislation — which I thought at the time was quite dry — and to illuminate us as to the intent of the changes that are proposed in the *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

As the minister has indicated, a large number of the amendments are to address the fact that the legislation is out of date. We understand that, essentially, the range of exempted activities — and I will be seeking confirmation for

this to make sure that I have, in fact, understood it correctly, and if I haven't, it can be clarified — remain the same. Essentially, what we are seeing is a change in language to include all types of fuel, and this is largely, as I understand it, because certainly we see down by the dam the inclusion of LNG as a fuel source. I understand, as the minister indicated, that this is revenue neutral. I will just ask him to confirm that.

The notion of bringing into current times the maximum fine for offences — I understand from the briefing that there have been not many but some instances of non-compliance with the act. I understand from the briefing that, in effect, this is like any other taxman kind of provision. The threat of being fined has been sufficient to motivate compliance. I would be interested in knowing if, in fact, there are any details of non-compliance and how they are identified. I believe I understood through the briefing that it is done by periodic audit, but I will be interested in knowing from the minister how that is done.

There is a provision in the proposed amendments in subsection 12 that talks about removing the expression “apply for”. I'm just assuming that every distributor and seller will still have to go through an application process to hold a valid licence and that maybe this is a language issue rather than a process issue, so we'll ask that of the minister.

I didn't ask this question in the briefing the other day, but I am interested in the user emblem provisions. Just for clarification — because as I read it again, subsection 16 removes the expression “about” and quotes “annual renewable fuel oil user emblems.” I think the way I read it that this appears to remove the need for operators of interprovincial carriers or carriers that go through our territory to renew their emblems annually. Again this is an assumption I'm making and I would seek confirmation or clarification that if that's intended to mean that the carriers would go through a one-time application process for a fuel oil user emblem. Does that then create a lifetime emblem for each licenced commercial vehicle or aircraft? I'm just curious about that, so the officials should be pleased that their briefing the other day did in fact take and generate some further thinking about it, which is a good sign, because sometimes you walk away and go, oh, well, I don't really understand any of that.

I understand that as I was going through this, the proposed amendments to the *Fuel Oil Tax Act* — and we did talk a little bit about this and I will be seeking some clarification to clarify that the proposed amendments — they have added a definition of “authorization” as “any permit, licence or emblem under this Act”. As I understand it, the proposed amendments appear to give the minister not only the authority to suspend or cancel any authorization for cause — and the minister spoke to that briefly in his second reading speech — but also the authority to issue authorizations so it's not suspension, but I think it's the issuance. I just want to confirm that.

I understand — at least the way I read it — that the proposed administrative provisions give the minister the authority to issue authorizations outside of a standardized application process. I'm wondering if that's correct as well. If that's true — if you don't need a standardized application

process to issue authorization, the question would be: What purpose and under what condition would that expanded authority be exercised?

Finally, Madam Chair, based on my notes that I took the other day and reviewed again, I believe the officials mentioned that there is an appeals process that's built in here and I just seek confirmation of that. Essentially, those would be the comments or questions that occurred to me, representing the Official Opposition in this case, as we have reviewed the *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think I have got most of the questions there. The first one was clarification on whether the exempt activities remain the same. The answer is yes — there has been no change to the exempt activities. I will also confirm that this is revenue-neutral. As you are aware, Madam Chair, until this point for example, in providing backup electricity, we have used diesel, which has always been an exempted fuel, so with the introduction of LNG we would be replacing diesel as the fuel oil with LNG, so there is no revenue impact to the government.

In the context of what the fine now is — I guess there were two pieces to this. It is going from \$1,000 to \$7,500. I mentioned inflation, but the other part that was also considered was other jurisdictions as well, in terms of how much money they would charge for similar fines. Looking at other jurisdictions and combining that with inflation over the last 50-plus years, the decision was made to go from \$1,000 to \$7,500.

The member opposite is correct. The threat of fine has been very effective. I believe there has only been one instance of a recorded case over time where it actually did go to court, so over all these years it is practically non-existent.

There were a number of things that go on to ensure compliance. There is a reporting mechanism — a filing — that must occur by all permit holders but, on top of the reporting process, there's also the opportunity for on-site visits by officials. There is the ability for the government to audit as well. That is how the government goes about ensuring that what has been submitted is accurate.

To become a permit holder, yes, there is an application process — that was one of the questions. Then, with the use of emblems, interprovincial carriers must apply on an annual basis. Those who are not regular holders can be issued a temporary permit, but would require a new one each time there is a new requirement. They would have to go back and do that.

The last question that the Leader of the Official Opposition asked was just around authorizations. I guess the best description for this is we've actually encompassed a process around the fact that you need permits and emblems, so this lays out the authorizations now for that. It also, then, lays out the ability to revoke those licences or permits or emblems. It also lays out the appeal process that would be available to people if they choose to do so.

I believe that that answers all the member opposite's questions and look forward to the next one.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his response.

I just want to go back to the issue of the — and maybe it's just that I am not reading it correctly. When I look at the proposed amendments to the act and the actual act, in 16(1), the way I read that is that it has removed the expression “for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. That is why I asked the question on whether or not it was a requirement. I just wondered how we read into this that you are supposed to renew it annually. Maybe he could just clarify how that section will read now in total.

If you have the *Fuel Oil Tax Act* in front of you and you look at 16(1) where the way it is written now, it seems to have that piece of it missing — where it says, “shall apply for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. That is what is in the current act under 16(1).

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The existing 16(1) does say that they “shall apply for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. The intent is that it will continue to be an annual licence. I am unaware of whether or not it will actually exist in the regulations at this point, but the intention of this will be to ensure that it continues to be an annual licence.

Ms. Hanson: It just begs the question of why it is left out. That is a fairly standard kind of thing to have in a piece of legislation, because that is the overall intention. It's not something normally that you would put into legislation.

That is what triggered the questions that I was asking about the need, particularly if we are not clear, for somebody coming from out of territory, interprovincial — the carriers who go through this territory or go Yukon-Alberta-B.C.

We all talk about the clarity of one-stop shopping, so that people aren't having to go through 14 rafts of government documents or sources to find out. So this was pretty straightforward. That doesn't seem to be straightforward.

That's why I had asked the question about whether or not — because a way you interpret the current way it's drafted, it would seem that you could go through a one-time application process for this fuel oil user emblem. Then, if you got the approval, essentially you have a lifetime approval emblem — a lifetime emblem; an emblem that's good for the life of that carrier or that vehicle or aircraft. So that's why I was asking that question, because that is a substantive difference between an annual approval and an approval that applies to that vehicle for whatever the life of that vehicle is.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Under section 31(2)(c), which says, “may, in issuing an authorization, make the authorization subject to any terms or conditions that the Minister considers appropriate” — so that's where the authority is for the minister to continue for it to be an annual renewal. Currently that renewal annually expires with the government's fiscal year, and that's March 31 of each year. They can acquire this at the weigh scales when they're coming into the territory.

Ms. Hanson: I would appreciate if the minister could cite in which section of section 31 he gets that requirement to annually get this at the weigh scale.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's 31(2) (c), which states that authorizations are subject to any terms or conditions that the minister considers appropriate, which then would default to

the regulation where it can be stipulated that that is in fact yearly, annually, and there is not intent to change it from its current annual cut-off date of March 31 of each year.

Ms. Hanson: So for clarity purposes and for clarity of those vehicles, commercial vehicles in particular, will the regulations be in place by March 31 of this year, coming up?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The regulations already exist, are in place in force and the annual cut-off date is March 31 of each year.

Ms. Hanson: I take that as an affirmation that the current regulations stipulate that it's March 31 for these emblems and that if you could just say that for the record, then that's what I'm looking for and would be happy.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yes.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak? We're going to move on to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *An Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that the Chair report Bill No. 76, entitled *An Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act* without amendment. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Chair: We are going to carry on now to Vote No. 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Environment

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The supplementary budget that I am presenting today for the Department of Environment would result in an increase of less than one percent over the \$38.825 million voted to date. Much of the net \$300,000 increase is due to implementation of the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. This budget is a good example of the wide range of activities undertaken by the department in support of our mandate. That includes: taking the lead role in regulating and enforcing safe standards for air, water and soil; managing human impacts on fish and wildlife; providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities in our parks and campgrounds; addressing the challenges of global climate change; and actively implementing the provisions of the First Nation final agreements.

With respect to our O&M expenditures, a total of \$726,000 is being sought. In the corporate services area, a total of \$108,000 is required; \$202,000 additional has been provided for three projects approved under the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Canada, which provides the Yukon government with just over \$1 million annually to implement federal obligations under the IFA. There is also an internal transfer of \$94,000 from the corporate services area to the environmental sustainability area to reflect the reporting relationship of the new health and safety risk management officer position currently being recruited.

In the environmental sustainability area, a total of \$523,000 is sought. The majority of these funds — \$420,000 — is needed for implementing the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. The plan has six priorities and over 50 actions, as a whole, providing the Yukon government with a strategic, comprehensive approach for its water management decisions. The Water Resources branch plans to replace aging water monitoring equipment. To do this, \$88,000 of operation and maintenance funds must be transferred to capital purchases.

An additional \$40,000 is needed to fund extending full services at 10 Yukon campgrounds for an additional three weeks — September 30 of this year — which allows Yukoners to benefit from this enhanced service. In addition, it aligns visitor services with transportation schedules and industry operations and demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting Yukon's tourism industry. That commitment was made earlier this year by me and the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Two revotes totalling \$31,000 are sought in order to support projects brought forward from 2013-14. One is a technical review of our remediation plan and the other is for a successful wildlife-human conflict conference held in April of this year. Finally, a total of \$26,000 was requested for two

Fish and Wildlife projects with all funds 100-percent recoverable.

Operation and maintenance funds are needed for the environmental liabilities and remediation area. A revote of \$95,000 is sought to complete environmental assessment work at the Swift River highway maintenance camp that began in 2013-14. Assessment is the vital first step in determining the nature and extent of contamination and from there the best options for cleanup. That concludes the changes requested to O&M funds for the Department of Environment.

With respect to capital, the department seeks approval for reducing its overall capital budget requirement for 2014-15 by \$426,000. Most significant is the deferral of \$1.414 million in expenditures for construction of a new campground on Atlin Lake. The project is on hold due to legal action initiated by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation.

A revote of \$485,000 is sought for work underway on a new building for the Watson Lake district office. There is \$200,000 sought for tenant improvements at 10 Burns Road, the department's headquarters building in Whitehorse. Improvements include making the entrance to the building more energy efficient, constructing an accessible washroom and reconfiguring the client services area. There is \$30,000 needed for the purchase of a new boat for Herschel Island's Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park. This cost is 100-percent recoverable pursuant to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Lastly, a total of \$273,000 is sought to help expand government's water monitoring networks and programs by adding or upgrading six water quality and 25 hydrometric monitoring stations and actions supporting the Yukon water strategy of planning needs now and in the future. The new *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* has been a major undertaking for the department and this is clearly reflected in this supplementary appropriation. I know we'll get into the discussion about the water strategy further on in Committee of the Whole.

Before I move on, I did want to note that I'm joined today by our deputy minister of Environment, Jim Connell, as well as the assistant deputy minister, Allan Koprowsky, for the Department of Environment as well.

Following my comments about the water strategy, I should take the moment to note that starting yesterday we are welcoming our new hydrogeologist to the Department of Environment, whose name is John Miller. I will maybe just read a brief piece about Mr. Miller.

The Water Resources branch is overjoyed to announce that John Miller has joined the team in the newly created position of hydrogeologist. For those of you following the water strategy development and implementation process you will know that this position was retained through the strategy and will be integral to implementing the groundwater aspects of the strategy.

John holds a master of science from the University of Waterloo and is registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C. as a geologist. Some may know John from Environment Canada where he has been for the last 10 years as senior

environmental scientist. John has worked on initiatives such as providing hydrogeological and geochemical advice for environmental assessments in Yukon and across Canada, leading investigations into the fate and transport of contaminants in groundwater and developing groundwater models for mine sites in Yukon, providing residual risk assessments for closure of mine tailing facilities, and the decommissioning of groundwater monitoring wells at contaminated sites. John may also be a familiar face from the Mount Mac ski trails.

On behalf of the department and in particular, the Water Resources branch, I would like to welcome John to the Department of Environment.

Secondly, prior to proceeding further into debate, I did want to thank staff from the animal health unit for an excellent tour of their new laboratory at 10 Burns Road. I had a chance last week to visit the newly renovated lab and tour the facilities there. That lab actually, coincidentally, has received some national attention over the past 24 to 36 hours as a result of their handling of a number of Bohemian waxwing birds that have ended up in our care as a result of consuming too many fermented berries and becoming intoxicated, flying into windows and landing in the care of Environment Yukon.

While I was there, there were three Bohemian waxwings in our care. Those that survive are, of course, transferred on to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve where they're sobered up and sent back into the wild. The sobering process is a difficult one, but I think that they're able to be re-acclimated back into the wild successfully in most cases. The piece that got the most coverage in the national news, I think, was essentially what the national media referred to as a "drunk tank for birds" — the small hamster cages that are developed to hold these Bohemian waxwings while they recuperate — well, recover, rather than recuperate.

This is all to highlight the fact that we do have a phenomenal facility at 10 Burns Road now by way of our laboratory. That newly renovated facility is part of the evolution of the Animal Health Unit and one that I am quite proud to support. Obviously we passed the *Animal Health Act* in this Legislature not too long ago and the implementation of that unit is going exceptionally well. I know that both the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have benefitted extremely well from having that more robust Animal Health Unit. As well, it gives the department a much more professional and usable space at the laboratory and a much more efficient and effective facility for our purposes.

As we heard in my opening statements, there are a number of other renovations occurring at 10 Burns Road. It is our hope that over the course of the implementation of the Animal Health Unit that we are able to perhaps make available to the public more of the exceptional specimens that the Animal Health Unit has on display internally.

With that, having noted some of the aspects of the department that are of interest recently, I would welcome questions from members opposite on the supplementary budget.

Ms. White: The waxwing story is going to be a hard one to follow up with.

I would like to start by welcoming the officials and thanking them again for their really thorough briefing. Sometimes it is hard to ask questions because I have already been given the answers, but I remind myself that it's part of what happens. Everyone deserves to hear the questions and the answers.

I would like to start off by congratulating and thanking the Department of Environment's spill response team. So a report made to Environment Yukon's spill reporting phone line about a residential oil tank and a 45-gallon fuel drum that had been dumped along a back road along the north Alaska Highway prompted immediate action by the Environment staff.

The following day, staff from Environment Yukon's Monitoring and Inspections section visited the dump site to investigate whether a spill of hazardous material had occurred. Later that same day, the environmental monitoring officer followed up with the complainant to advise that there had been no spill and that they had removed the tanks, which also included two 30-gallon propane tanks.

It was incredible — from start to finish, I think it was 48 hours from when it had been recognized, to reported, to cleaned up. That's just an incredible example of the good work that the department does. So thank you so much to them, and I wanted to highlight that for everybody else in the general public who might not know that it's just that easy to report your concerns about spills or hazardous materials, and the Department of Environment will be right there to clean it up. So thank you so much for that, and I just acknowledge that with the minister here so everyone can hear how fantastic it is.

During the briefing, we had an opportunity to talk about a lot of different things that were both in the supplementary budget and just that were happening in general. We talked about some of the different things that the department has been doing. So if the minister would talk about the hunting ban of the Hart River caribou herd along the Dempster Highway, and kind of the state of affairs for the Porcupine caribou herd and the Fortymile herd, I would appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite for the question and for the comments about staff in the department. It is appreciated. Making Yukoners aware that they can report spills, as the member opposite indicated, is very important, and I appreciate her efforts to make Yukoners aware that that is available to Yukoners. That is something we hope Yukoners will do more.

Specifically with regard to the Hart River caribou herd, this, of course, is an issue because the caribou hunting closure is required in areas along the southern portion of the Dempster Highway to protect that herd. The Hart River caribou herd is a small woodland caribou herd that shares part of its wintering grounds with the much larger Porcupine caribou herd. Current estimates place the population of the Hart River caribou herd at about 2,200 animals, whereas the Porcupine herd is much larger, at 197,000 caribou at last count.

Most years the Porcupine caribou herd spends part of the winter along the southern Dempster Highway, outnumbering the Hart River caribou herd many times over. This swamping effect normally reduces the risks to the Hart River herd of overharvest. However, this year only a small number of Porcupine caribou are near this area of the overlap, so almost all of the caribou currently in the area are Hart River woodland caribou. As such, a closure is required for the area of overlap, including game management subzones 2-16, 2-23, 2-27, 2-28 and 2-39. Those are between the North Fork Pass and the Ogilvie River, kilometre 77 to kilometre 195 on the Dempster highway.

Caribou from both herds are normally located within the overlap and several adjacent and nearby game management zones. These five game management zones have been identified for closure, as they provide significant access to hunters. Currently in the overlap area, caribou harvest by resident and non-resident hunters is managed under the Hart River caribou regulations until the Porcupine caribou arrive. Until October 31, one bull caribou may be taken. If the Porcupine caribou arrive, two bulls may be taken between November 1 and January 31.

I think that answers the member's questions with regard to the Hart River closure and as it relates to the Porcupine caribou herd, but I haven't yet touched on the Fortymile caribou herd, which she is looking for.

The Fortymile caribou herd is a barren ground caribou herd that ranges between Yukon and Alaska. Historically, it ranged between Fairbanks and Whitehorse and numbered in the hundreds of thousands. The population of this herd was last estimated at approximately 52,000 in 2010. At its lowest, in 1973, the population was as little as 6,500. The population low is driven by environmental factors and a high harvest in Alaska.

From 1997 to 2011, management actions have focused on recovery of the herd so that it can grow large enough to re-occupy its historic range in Yukon. In Alaska, recovery management has meant conservative harvest rates, wolf control, land use management and ongoing communication efforts. Alaska currently harvests approximately two percent of the herd in a highly regulated hunt. In Yukon, no licensed harvest has taken place since 1995 and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has encouraged its citizens not to harvest the Fortymile caribou herd.

Yukon, including the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Dawson Renewable Resources Council, participates in the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition with Alaska to ensure the continued conservation of the herd. Yukon has participated on recovery planning on the harvest management plans approved by the Alaska Board of Game. Technical staff from Yukon government and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are undertaking discussions respecting harvest of the Fortymile caribou herd in TH traditional territory.

Yukon government is also engaged with neighbouring First Nations and will further engage if the herd range expands

into those traditional territories. An initial harvest strategy is expected to be completed by summer 2015.

In the spring of 2013, two regulation changes were advanced by me as minister and recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. These amendments are expected to take effect in the spring of next year.

They are, first of all, changing the current regulation that prohibits any licensed harvest of the Fortymile caribou herd so that licensed harvest is at the minister's discretion to support adaptive harvest of the herd. The second is altering four game management subzones from Porcupine caribou herd zones to Fortymile caribou herd zones to ensure that the Fortymile caribou is not accidentally harvested under Porcupine caribou herd regulations. Currently, a licensed harvester could purchase two over-the-counter caribou tags and harvest two Fortymile caribou in these four subzones.

In June of 2013, Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers travelled to Dawson City to meet with Yukon stakeholders, including our officials from the Department of Environment, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Dawson RRC. They met to discuss herd size and summer habitat.

As the herd has become more prevalent in Yukon, increased collaboration between jurisdictions resulted in Yukon government committing to more involvement in monitoring the herd. Alaska is determining the optimal number of caribou that can be sustained in the current range. Research to predict current and future habitats in both Yukon and Alaska are being initiated.

The winter diet of the herd across its range will be assessed, where feasible. Yukon has regularly monitored the herd's distributions since recovery actions returned the herd to the territory in large numbers around 2002. In 2013-14, increased efforts were made to document an expansion into habitats not used since the 1950s. The department has collaborated by purchasing, deploying and maintaining a number of satellite GPS collars on the herd to conduct research on the herd's range and productivity. The collars will track the herd's movement in real time to assist in harvest management and updating the population estimates for 2015.

The department works completed to date includes the development of a lichen map in parts of the herd's historic range, a habitat model and mapping of developments. Recommendation measures that could reduce human-made effects on the herd's range are also in the final stages of review.

As in winter of 2013-14, staff this year will focus on assessing the herd's distribution using aerial and ground telemetry and satellite collar locations. The department is also working directly with Alaska Department of Fish and Game field staff to ensure other monitoring — for example, fall capture and composition surveys — is completed, should the herd move into Yukon.

Management in Yukon this fall will focus on assessing harvest risk should the herd enter an area where harvest is currently permitted. To meet commitments made to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Alaska management organizations,

we will consider the use of emergency closures to ensure the herd is not heavily harvested.

In conclusion, I would just note that the Fortymile caribou herd is an excellent example of collaboration between the Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska. I know that officials on both sides of the border have really appreciated that collaboration. I had a chance to sit down with an official from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game this past summer and discuss a number of items of mutual interest, including the Fortymile herd. It's wonderful to have the support of our neighbours in the management of this herd. The resources that the Government of Alaska have to manage these types of herds and to take action on herd management tend to be far more expansive than ours, but the shared expertise and the shared willingness to manage these herds collaboratively is very important to both of us.

Obviously the approach taken in Alaska to managing caribou herds is a little bit different. They have a different view on wolf control, for instance, from we do on this side of the border, but that's something that we are able to manage and move past.

In general, I would say that the relationship is very strong, and the Fortymile caribou herd is not only an example of great collaboration between our territory and the State of Alaska, but indeed of a successful recovery of a herd that was almost decimated. That is a real story that we should, as Yukoners, be proud of — the fact that we were able to take management actions in collaboration with our neighbours in Alaska to recover the herd to what it is today. I think it bears reflection on some of the numbers that I spoke about earlier with regard to how low that herd actually got — down to several thousand caribou. It is worth reflecting on the success we have had in recovering that herd and the strong example of partnership between Yukon and the State of Alaska on that. I would like to thank the officials on both sides of the border for that work and commend that work to all Yukoners.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his answers and that fantastic example of cross-jurisdiction management. That flows quite nicely into my next question about the Southern Lakes woodland caribou. We have talked about it on the floor of this House before — how the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has an internal ban on hunting of the Southern Lakes woodland caribou, whereas their neighbours to the south, on the B.C. border side, do not share that same hunting ban, which leads to the occasional disagreement between outfitters who take clients to hunt on the B.C. side and then they drive through the community of Carcross with Southern Lakes woodland caribou in the backs of pickup trucks.

Understanding the good cross-border relationship with Alaska, can the minister tell us how the management of the Southern Lakes woodland caribou is going with our neighbours to the south with British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Southern Lakes caribou herd, we have a licensed hunting closure there. Since 1993, Yukon has had a licensed hunting closure and voluntary First Nation hunting ban on the Southern Lakes caribou as a part of the recovery program.

Although British Columbia was involved in the development of the Southern Lakes caribou recovery program, a licensed hunting closure was never implemented in British Columbia. Senior officials in Yukon have engaged British Columbia multiple times to discuss the need for a matched licensed hunting closure in British Columbia, but that work continues to be ongoing and we have more work to do with regard to discussing those matters with British Columbia. We do know that ongoing discussions are happening with British Columbia to match the hunting ban on the Southern Lakes caribou.

The Southern Lakes caribou are comprised of three herds: the Ibex herd, the Carcross herd and the Atlin herd. The Carcross caribou herd — one of the Southern Lakes herds — is a transboundary herd ranging within both Yukon and British Columbia. The combined recovery target for the Ibex and Carcross herds is 2,000 animals. According to the 2008 survey, the Carcross herd is at approximately 800 animals and the Ibex herd is approximately 850 animals.

Developed by the Southern Lakes Caribou Steering Committee, the recovery program includes population monitoring, habitat assessments, game guardian patrols, public education and school programs. Between 2008 and 2014, the British Columbia resident and non-resident harvest levels, including outfitters, were an average of six caribou per year. Only bulls are harvested. There are two outfitting concessions operated in the British Columbia portion of the caribou range. The outfitters and B.C. hunters are harvesting the Carcross herd. The only road access into the British Columbia outfitting concessions is the South Klondike Highway between the British Columbia border and the United States border. Obviously there's more work to be done with regard to the Government of British Columbia and establishing what I earlier indicated was a need for a matching ban of hunting on that side of the border. That work is ongoing.

On a bit of a different issue, although it's related, I wanted to note that the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works are working with local renewable resources councils to try to reduce the number of caribou involved in vehicle-wildlife collisions. Public education campaigns and roadside signage have been effective in warning motorists when they are in the area where collisions with wildlife are frequent. We are currently undertaking a study to better define collision hotspots so we can enhance our efforts in these areas. A road salt program is in place to protect wildlife and the environment, without compromising public safety.

The program includes using minimal concentrations of sodium chloride — same as table salt — in sand mix, which is applied to Yukon roadways only when necessary. Although measures are being taken to prevent vehicle-wildlife collisions, approximately six caribou from the Carcross herd are killed each winter by vehicle collisions. The Carcross caribou herd's winter range includes the Alaska Highway, Tagish Road and Klondike Highway. Caribou frequently cross

these roads between November and April as they move through their winter range in search of food.

Salt is sought by caribou and other ungulates due to its relative rarity in their natural diets. This work is the result of many years of collaboration between the Department of Environment and Highways and Public Works, as we have been working for quite some time to improve signage on the highways.

In 2012, the departments of Environment Highways and Public Works formed the preventing Yukon wildlife collisions interdepartmental working group that develops and implements adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions on Yukon roads. This working group recently commissioned a study by an independent contractor to conduct analyses of hotspots where wildlife collisions occur. The information gathered will inform the development of mitigations that could be implemented in Yukon to reduce the number of wildlife killed on Yukon roadways, and in fact any large mammal species on roadways.

Results of the highway collisions study will also be used to guide further efforts to mitigate vehicle-wildlife collisions. Mitigations currently implemented to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions in Yukon include warning signs and digital message boards alongside highways, vegetation management within the highway right-of-way and public awareness events such as school visits and sharing information at the Environment Fair, as well as radio and newspaper ads and radio and TV interviews.

By way of financial applications, I should note that approximately \$4,000 is spent annually on road signage and paid advertising to bring awareness to reduce collisions with caribou. In 2013-14, \$18,000 was spent to complete the study on vehicle-wildlife collisions in Yukon. This is again an area where we try our best to work with the communities, the RRCs, and other departments to try to find solutions to problems that tend to occur in the Southern Lakes area with regard to that caribou population.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for reading my mind as to what the next part was, because we have talked about highway and animal collisions.

He mentioned the highway collision study and I think he actually had a completion date for some time in 2014. I'm wondering if he can let us know when that will be tabled. The population — the animal numbers that he cited — I think he said they were from 2008. Is there any plan to do a more current animal survey about the numbers of those herds?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the survey, the most recent data we have seems to indicate that the survey may just have been completed very recently. If it is something that is appropriate for me to table, I will look into tabling it. If not, I can perhaps share it with the member outside of the Legislature.

With regard to when we will be conducting the next composition study of the Carcross caribou herds — that's something we are working on right now. If members will bear with me for a few moments, I will give a response.

We will have to get back to you with a date on that one, Madam Chair. We conduct these studies as needed, and we do so in collaboration with renewable resources councils and First Nations. I don't have the date for when the next composition survey of the Carcross caribou herd will be completed.

Ms. White: I thank the officials who are going through their very large binders of everything in the department. If the minister would be so kind, once there is an idea of when that will happen, he could pass on the information that would be fantastic.

This summer we saw something pretty phenomenal happen, which was a total ban of fishing along the Yukon River for Yukon River salmon. I was wondering if we could have an update of the salmon statistics for this year's run, and maybe the minister could talk a bit about his intergovernmental relationship there as well, and what the next steps proceeding forward to protect the Yukon River chinook are.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is indeed another example, I think, of the fairly strong relationship between the Government of Yukon and our neighbours in Alaska. It's an issue that's important to not just Yukoners along the Yukon River, but all Yukoners. The chinook salmon runs in the Yukon River have obviously been very poor over the last while and, without a doubt, there has been a clear need for action to be taken. In this case, obviously the substantive action that needs to be taken is on the Alaska side of the border. That's where the vast majority of the harvest occurs for chinook salmon.

We were actually very pleased to see that action was taken this year. It's not something that we should underestimate. I think the action taken in Alaska is very difficult. The use of the salmon for commercial purposes in Alaska is far more extensive than it is here in Yukon. In some communities along the river, the livelihood of the community is dependent upon fishing salmon.

So when measures are taken by the government, they're not taken lightly and they're taken when there's a defined need. This is a case where there was a defined need, where there was certainly action that needed to be taken.

We know that the 2014 Yukon River chinook salmon run was forecast to be poor. The run did end up being stronger than forecast. Through unprecedented restrictions to all fisheries on both sides of the border, conservation targets were met this year. We all want to see chinook salmon runs return to historic levels to meet subsistence and cultural needs of First Nations and to support sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries.

Yukon government continues to be very concerned with the current state of the chinook salmon and we're committed to working with our federal colleagues from Fisheries and Oceans Canada who manage salmon, our partners in Alaska and Yukon First Nations to ensure the fishery is sustainably managed and equitably allocated.

I should also note that while the conservation targets were met, from the information I've received these conservation

targets tend to be very conservative and the fact that we've met them is good and it is progress, but we know that there is much more work to be done. There is a range of opinions among Yukoners as to how long this kind of action needs to be taken. I know that some members of Yukon communities feel that there needs to be a closure for a full cycle — so seven or eight years of full closure to allow the salmon to recover. There are others who believe that more strategic closures are necessary.

But nonetheless, I have to highlight once again the fact that it's easy for us on this side of the border to say that there should be no fishing of salmon in Alaska, but the real ramifications of those decisions are over in Alaska. I don't envy the role of those folks in Alaska who have to make those tough decisions about closing fishing for some of those communities because, as I've said, in some of the communities along the Yukon River on the Alaska side of the border, the commercial fishery is the only livelihood that is available to many of those communities.

Again, I have to reiterate the fact that we really appreciate and respect and commend those in Alaska who are making these very difficult decisions and taking these very real and appreciated efforts. We respectfully ask that they continue to take those actions and we will continue to add our voice to those who want to see continued action — to the ultimate end of seeing this population of chinook salmon recover to historic levels.

We do know that the chinook salmon are tremendously important to Yukon people, to Yukon First Nations as well. Whether you are Yukon First Nation or not, everybody can appreciate the history that is involved with the salmon in Yukon. I have seen — and I am sure others have seen — pictures of not that long ago — a generation or two ago — when, in places like Teslin, they were fishing quite massive salmon and it is really unfortunate and sad that that is not able to occur any more.

So we want to try to do our part and we want to encourage others to do their part to try to recover that population to historic levels. We do that through a number of ways. Obviously the Yukon government has representation on the Yukon River Panel. We also work closely with Canada and Alaska on conservation and management of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon.

At more senior levels, we also work and communicate directly with these governments to represent Yukon's interests on this important issue. We are committed to working at all levels to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to healthy and sustainable chinook salmon for generations to come.

On both sides of the border, restraint and unprecedented restrictions led to the lowest harvest of chinook in recent memory. In Yukon, Fisheries and Oceans Canada took the unprecedented step to close all fisheries, including the First Nation subsistence fishery. When the chinook run materialized stronger than anticipated, DFO allowed First Nations, if they were interested, to harvest a small allocation as allowed under the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001*.

Most First Nations, though, did continue their closures and others harvested a small amount for ceremonial purposes.

It is also relevant — given the fact that it's Geoscience Week — that the Casino mining company received an award as we know yesterday — last night — for its work with First Nations to provide salmon to them, despite the fact that there was a closure in place. They flew in salmon from Outside so that First Nation could have access to salmon for the purposes of traditional practices and ceremonies. We see some fairly extraordinary efforts being taken by First Nations, by industry and by Yukoners of all sorts to do their part.

Obviously, while I did mention the significant sacrifice made on the Alaska side of the border, I would be remiss if I didn't also note that the sacrifice on this side of the border was indeed also considerable. Yukon First Nations have been very patient and very proactive in managing their salmon on the Yukon side of the border. Their voluntary restrictions and voluntary measures that they have taken over this year and the previous years are, again, no small task. The fact that they are willing to make these sacrifices is indicative of how important the salmon are to the Yukon First Nations. We certainly appreciate the sacrifices made by those First Nations as well.

To conclude, I should note that sacrifices have been made on both sides of the border. They are considerable measures and we need to continue to take these measures if we want to see salmon return to historical levels.

I wanted to also mention that there are some things going forward that we need to discuss and address over the coming years. Some of those relate to the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001* itself. Over the past 12 years since the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001* was signed, several substantive issues in the application and interpretation of the agreement have arisen. These are: first, that there is no oversight body or dispute resolution mechanism; the U.S. and Canada do not agree about the role of the Yukon River Panel in salmon management; Canada understands their role to be more important and significant than does the United States, especially when it comes to making recommendations to the management entities as per sections 14, 15 and 17; and, there are no actual consequences for overharvest. These issues have been raised at the Yukon River Panel meetings, but this has not proven to be an effective forum for making headway on these issues. In the March 2014 meeting, the United States delegation didn't permit or agree with advancing any of the substantial interests of the Canadian delegation. At this stage, Canadian First Nations and other stakeholders are starting to get frustrated with the lack of tangible progress made in Alaska with managing their harvests and are looking for all levels of government to engage to solve this issue. For our part, Yukon continues to work through all these channels to address these issues.

Both myself and the Premier have been in contact with the Governor of Alaska, the United States Ambassador to Canada, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for Canada and the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise Yukon's interests in regard to chinook salmon. Department officials are also working with Fisheries and

Oceans Canada, as well as Alaskan agencies, to highlight these concerns.

I guess to conclude that aspect of my response, I should note that, while we've been successful in achieving some action, we think that there's the potential for further change that may be necessary to the institutions through which we manage this species, and we look forward to engaging with our colleagues across the border and across levels of government to pursue these interests.

With the election of a new governor in Alaska, I'm sure our Premier will be reaching out to the governor very soon in the course of intergovernmental relations. I will make certain that the issue of Yukon River chinook salmon is top of the list for the Premier to raise with the new governor.

I think that answers, as best I can, the question raised by the member opposite.

Chair: Before we continue, would the members like a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

We're going to continue general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment.

Ms. White: I thank this House for that 15-minute break, because it helped me get a couple more papers together. On May 7 of this year, we debated a motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, talking about things we could do for salmon. I was just looking, and the reason I don't remember asking during the department budget debate, is because we debated the Department of Environment on April 22 — so prior to that debate.

The reason this is relevant is that the minister has just spoken about — he referenced DFO and things. Anyway, there was a May 8 press release by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans this year, where it was talking about the piscine reo-virus. That is the basis for this. I read this during the debate and I just have questions in relation to this.

I was lucky earlier this year to watch a documentary called *Salmon Confidential*. For anyone who is interested in the welfare of wild salmon, I suggest you watch it. The documentary follows the health of wild salmon and how they are affected by the fish farms along the Fraser River. That population of fish has crashed in recent years, all for hard-to-pinpoint reasons until the fish started to be tested for infections. European strains of the piscine reo-virus and infectious salmon anemia have been discovered in the wild salmon populations, and fish farms appear to be the cause. The reason that this is relevant, Madam Chair, is that the migration paths of our Yukon River chinook salmon and the Fraser River chinook and sockeye salmon — they cross paths. I had spoken to the biologist, Alexander Morton, about this — and she has been ringing alarm bells for some time about this

issue — and she explained that the viruses are designed to survive and that they depend on their ability to jump from fish to fish. The very strength of a virus is its ability to do the fish-to-fish crossing when those populations cross in the ocean.

I speculated during the debate — what if the decline in our chinook salmon run is directly or indirectly linked to what is happening in the Fraser River, and are we testing for these two European virus strains? Then, at the end of our conversation, she left me with a sobering thought. She said, "Why wouldn't you want to rule this out as a possibility?"

Then I went to the press release on May 8. The title is "Piscine Reo-virus (PRV) on the West Coast of North America" and it is halfway through the first paragraph. It says, "Since that time, additional survey work through various labs and agencies in Canada and the United States has expanded the known host range of PRV" — which is the piscine reo-virus — "to include: wild Cutthroat Trout, wild Chinook Salmon, wild Sockeye Salmon ..." — and the list goes on.

When I brought this up during the debate on the motion, I was told in the response that was the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and I understand that. My question now to the minister is: Has he, as Minister of Environment, asked the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to test either for the piscine reo-virus or the infectious salmon anemia in our northern populations of chinook salmon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I have not.

Ms. White: Is this something that the minister would entertain as something to be tested for? Is it something that is on his radar as maybe being part of the causes of our declining populations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, that is something that we have entertained and we'll look into that matter.

Ms. White: Fantastic. I look forward to further conversations with the minister and the department about that. I guess that's pretty exciting news if that's somewhere we go. I apologize to the officials because I didn't even ask about salmon during the briefing. It was just something I decided I would follow up on while we were here.

The fantastic news that Yukon now has a hydrogeologist on staff is really exciting with the development of the Yukon water strategy. During the briefing, we were told that there was some new equipment purchased for hydrology stations and the minister is going to correct my terminology. If he can give us some more information about what is being done with the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* — what kind of stuff the hydrogeologist has on his plate to start off with — and then maybe some information about those hydrology stations.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The development of the Yukon water strategy, of course, was a priority of the government and now that we have developed the water strategy, its implementation is one of the chief focuses of the Department of Environment right now. The member is correct and, as I noted in my opening remarks, we are very pleased that Mr. John Miller has joined us as the hydrogeologist as recently as yesterday. That is one aspect of the implementation of the water strategy, but I am happy to

provide a more fulsome report on how the water strategy is being implemented.

The Yukon government is investing \$2.7 million over the course of three years to execute the Yukon water strategy. Funds will be used for a variety of projects, including installing and upgrading 26 new hydrometric stations and establishing five new water quality monitoring stations. Work is already underway on several actions, including the hiring of the new hydrogeologist I just mentioned. A water-monitoring specialist will be hired to formalize the community-based water monitoring program, install and upgrade hydrometric stations, seek to add new wells to the groundwater network, plan a water forum in February 17 and 18, 2015 for water managers across the territory, develop a system to track water allocation for licences, and conduct a research study on the Dempster Highway that will help to better understand and adapt to climate change impacts on Yukon's hydrological regime.

A Yukon government working group, comprised of members from the seven departments with water related responsibilities, is working together to implement the water strategy actions. Yukon government will provide regular updates about implementation of the water strategy on yukonwater.ca and at water forums like the one I just mentioned. The strategy itself was developed over the course of two years through an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process. The strategy will be evaluated in five years with a report on progress.

To promote public awareness of the water strategy and implementation, we have invested approximately \$50,000 in a comprehensive two-phase publicity campaign, including print, radio, web, Facebook and Google ads. Members who frequent any of those sites I'm sure will have seen the advertisements in action. We've had good feedback about them and they seem to be well-received.

The new hydrometric and water quality monitoring stations were deliberately and strategically chosen to create a comprehensive network that complements the existing sites, which include Yukon government, federal and industry stations, and helps to address the following priorities: first, making more informed decisions about industrial development; second, providing baseline information for industry that will enable them to meet regulatory requirements more efficiently; third, providing information that can be used for expansion of sectorial needs in the future of hydroelectric municipal, mining, oil and gas and other resource development; and, four, to better understand and respond to the effects of climate change that cost our government money, including road washouts and damage to infrastructure.

This summer, we upgraded existing stations and installed six new hydrometric stations, including Eagle River at Dempster Highway; McParlon Creek on the Whitestone River in the Porcupine River drainage; DalGLISH Creek in the Peel River drainage; the Klondike River at Rock Creek; the Yukon River at Carmacks; and the Beaver River below Whitefish. This summer, we upgraded existing stations and installed two

new water quality stations, including the Porcupine River at Old Crow and the Old Crow River at the mouth.

Our department now has a total of 10 long-term water quality stations around the territory and three additional at Eagle River, Ogilvie River, and Haggart Creek targeted for future expansion. There are an additional 20 water quality stations designed to gather baseline information in the Eagle Plains Basin, the White Gold area and the Kotaneelee gas fields in Southeast Yukon.

The implementation of the water strategy is well underway. We're deploying significant new resources throughout the territory and we have been successful so far in recruiting the personnel we need to fill the positions necessary to see this work completed.

I'm very happy with the work we've done to date, the considerable expenditure we've undertaken already and the new stations that are now in place throughout the Yukon, with more to come in the coming years.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that and just want to give credit to the Department of Environment for the Yukon water website. It's a fantastic tool and it's pretty user-friendly for someone who's computer illiterate, so I appreciate that and look forward to more additions and more information coming along.

The minister mentioned that, in the Yukon water strategy, he was looking at having more groundwater wells added to the monitoring system. I was wondering if he could give me an idea of how many that might be, or timelines, or any of that kind of information.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The half-dozen or so hydrometric stations that I just listed, which were installed just recently, will be bolstered by a number of new ones in the future, including next year and beyond.

Those include the South Macmillan River at kilometre 407 on the Canol Highway; Boulder Creek at the Canol Highway; the 180 Mile Creek at Canol Highway; the Hess River, above Emerald Creek; Whitestone River, at the mouth; the Primrose River above Kusawa Lake; Drury Creek at Campbell Highway; Little South Klondike River; the Hyland River at Nahanni Range Road; Looney Creek, near the mouth of the river; Burwash Creek at the Alaska Highway; Dry Creek number 2 at the Alaska Highway; Rock River at the Dempster Highway; the Liard River at above Black River; the Bonnet Plume River at above Gillespie Creek; Big Salmon River near Carmacks; Sidney Creek at the South Canol highway; the Ogilvie River at the Dempster Highway; and the Babbage River, below Caribou Creek. Those are all planned for 2015. The last seven or eight that I listed were planned for 2016. In all, these represent 26 new hydrometric stations that will be added to our network in the coming years.

I think that was the extent of the question — how many new stations, where they were, and what the timelines were. I hope I have answered the question. If I missed an aspect, I look forward to hearing that.

Ms. White: I thank the minister. That is what I was looking for.

Today, with the passing of the domestic water wells act, I have some questions around how we are going to collect that water data survey. If we have a few hundred residents in a country residential subdivision who all put in wells, will Yukon government regulations ensure that all wells are reported so there is a data bank of information on water quality, water flow, seasonal flow and things like that? Will that data bank include all wells and not just those applying under the domestic water wells program, just to make sure that, if we have a flowering of wells in the near future, we are aware of how it is affecting our water resources?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm not anticipating a flowering of new wells but perhaps there could be a flood of new wells. I'm not sure. In any event, yes, we are trying to incorporate the data that is compiled from private wells that are drilled by independent contractors. Right now we ask that people who are drilling new wells submit their data about the depth of well and the type of flow, et cetera and we incorporate that into a database. However at this point it is not mandatory for all new wells to have their data submitted. We have not gone down that path yet.

At this point, we have relied on voluntary submissions of data by individuals. We have been in touch with, to the best extent we can, all of the drilling companies — the ones that we are aware of at least — in Whitehorse and in the Yukon and have indicated to them our interest in bolstering the database of private wells to complement our general knowledge about Yukon's water resources. They are aware that we are interested in that data. We've asked them to submit it where possible. We have had a reasonable uptake of that and we do have data from private wells that is available but it's not a regulatory requirement and it's not a legal requirement. It's voluntary.

Ms. White: I give credit to the minister for finding the right language for what I was looking for, which would be a flood of new wells. Good for him.

Just in talking about that and asking about a voluntary disclosure of information for the drilling of new wells — understanding that we have existing wells and we might have new wells, depending on how much information is shared between the private contractors and government, would this be possibly something that the minister would look toward being a regulatory requirement, so we can understand more about where those wells are in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We will consider whether or not to include that as a regulatory requirement, but I was reminded recently that, when funding is provided through the rural well program, the one that we've recently extended to municipalities, there is a requirement under that program to submit data. So if you're receiving funding from government through one of those programs, then there is the requirement to submit data, but if an individual or a company were to drill their own well, independent of government, there is no regulatory requirement for them to submit that information but, once again, as I indicated, we would ask that they voluntarily submit that.

At this point, we haven't considered making it a regulatory requirement across the board. That could be something we consider in the future, though.

Ms. White: I thank the minister. That makes perfect sense that if someone was applying for funding, he would have the information. So thank you for that clarification.

There were some concerns raised when we were talking about the domestic water well program prior — or just drilling wells, period — which is, in other jurisdictions, there's a legal requirement that the property owner or the well-driller can prove that the septic field is 100 feet away from the water source

I mean, there may not be a huge uptake on the program for the domestic water wells, but if there is, are there any concerns with the Department of Environment that wells will be drilled too close to septic fields or that someone might drill a well too close to their neighbour, or a neighbour might put in a septic field too close to a well that is already existing — or any concerns like that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am not aware of any concerns that Environment would have necessarily, but I would suspect that there are some environmental health requirements probably around drilling a water well through a septic field. I'm not sure if that's something that the Department of Health and Social Services looks at under Environmental Health. Members are indicating that it is in fact — so that is something that is looked at through Environmental Health, likely, but I am not aware of any concerns that the Department of Environment would have with that sort of activity.

Ms. White: This spring when we passed amendments to the *Environment Act*, the minister was given new powers to be able to ban hazardous substances in the territory. Today there is a release from Ontario of the Ontario Medical Association — I believe — and others asking the Ontario government to ban the use of neonicotinoids.

This has been a motion that I have rephrased several times, and I wanted to know if that was something that the minister was looking at under his new powers on hazardous substances, to look at banning something like neonicotinoids, which are associated with the decline in bee health and populations.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When the member put forward that motion, I confess it was the first time I had encountered the issue, but have since followed up and looked into the issue.

I should also note that there is a bit of a national campaign driven by some environmental organization — I'm not sure which one — but that has seen tens of thousands of e-mails come to all Environment ministers across the country. Over the past number of weeks, my e-mail has been flooded numerous times by various Canadians urging me to ban neonicotinoids in our respective jurisdictions. I have had this discussion with department officials about whether or not we should enact a ban or whether or not other measures are necessary.

We have had some discussion with Agriculture in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to determine

whether or not this is a common substance in any of the products used by the agriculture industry in Yukon. Our understanding is that it is not currently being used in the agriculture industry in Yukon at this time; however, what we've determined, based on the information I have received, is that what is the most likely pathway for this substance to enter Yukon would be in bedding plants that are imported from the south. A regulatory ban on the product itself may not be effective in keeping that substance out through that channel.

What we're hoping to begin to do is communicate with some of the retailers or wholesalers of bedding plants in Yukon to get a sense of the supply chain of their products and whether or not, throughout that chain, this product would be used. There is a bit of responsibility incumbent on people who are purchasing those plants to ask about whether or not that plant had ever had any contact with this product, but in order for people to know whether or not they need to ask that, there is some education that is necessary. We are looking into how we might communicate with Yukoners about ensuring that we don't see this product come into the territory. We have contemplated a regulatory ban, but we're not sure that that would be effective. It may be a nice thing to do and it sounds good that we banned it, but there may be other measures that would be more effective, including education and discussions with some of the retailers of bedding plants in the territory, that may be more effective than a ban.

It is something we are looking at. If a ban is necessary, I am willing to do it and willing to undertake that through the *Environment Act* — especially the changes made earlier this year — but we want to make sure that it is a reasonable step and it is going to be effective. That's where we are on this issue.

Ms. White: Bees and beekeepers everywhere are happy to hear that news. Just to go along that line for a bit — and I am glad I haven't had to read this yet in a motion, because it has 15 or 16 letters and it is referred to as the new “f-word” for bees. It talks about how it is an insecticide systemic pesticide similar to the controversial neonicotinoids or neonic family of bee-killing chemicals. When applied to seeds or soil, it is absorbed by plant roots and travels to leaves, flowers, pollen and nectar, making the plant potentially toxic to insects.

That might be your next campaign, where you get 10,000 e-mails from concerned Canadians about pesticides that affect bees. I think that the real issue behind this is that it sounds like a minor issue, but without bees we don't have an agriculture system; we don't have fruit trees. They're the main pollinators in our environment.

So it's heartening to hear the minister talk about becoming more informed, and I'm sure the national campaign that I had no idea about has really helped that, but when will the department and the minister decide on the next steps with the neonicotinoids?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said, we've had discussions with officials; we've had discussions with agriculture and we've determined that, at this point, we think the best step

forward would be educating Yukoners about the issue. If it's determined that we need to take regulatory action, we'll do it at the appropriate time.

I don't have a specific time for the member opposite with regard to when we would undertake that, but the provisions of the act that we brought in last sitting make it possible, and there's willingness that I've expressing right now to do it. It's just a matter of whether or not it's the best course of action and that's something we're still determining.

Ms. White: That's fantastic and I thank the minister for that. Has he, with his new powers under the *Environment Act*, banned any hazardous substances so far? Just curious.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At this point, no, we haven't banned any substances through the *Environment Act*, but we're taking a look at the list in other jurisdictions right now to determine what products we would need to ban and then making a list of the ones that are common throughout Canada. We'll bring them all in at once, to start off with. Following that, there would be a process by which products could be, for lack of a better word, nominated to be banned — once that process is in place that would be the process going forward. At this point we haven't formally banned any products, but we're determining which ones are appropriate to do so and we will be doing that in the future.

Ms. White: To go back to something that maybe isn't coming quite so far out of left field, I asked questions during the briefing about the Aishihik bison herd and I'll go back that way now.

We've talked about it before because the herd, unlike the caribou herd sadly that are struggling a bit more, has had no problem flourishing in the Yukon. The numbers are steadily increasing to the point that it has changed the regulations, so now I believe female bison can be — I believe it's open to everything — so if the minister wants to give us an update on the Aishihik bison herd and kind of what the department's doing in that management process.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, bison management is a bit of a contrast compared to caribou, as the member noted. The bison population is closely monitored in order to meet the management objectives established in the 2012 bison management plan.

The Department of Environment, in conjunction with its partners in bison management, is taking measures to increase opportunities for bison hunters. For example, maps of known bison locations are made available on the department website during the hunting season. These maps incorporate known bison locations from information gathered over the past three years.

Also, to help increase harvest numbers, the department has reduced the bison seal fee from \$50 to \$10 and will allow special guiding of bison to take place starting on April 1. Hunting is the primary method used to manage the herd's size. In 2013-14, 136 bison were harvested. Harvest models suggest that over the next three years, current harvest levels will need to be maintained or increased and the harvest more evenly balanced between bulls and cows.

The most recent inventory saw an increase from the 1,230 bison estimated in July of 2011 to approximately 1,470, including calves, in July 2014. Adaptive management for bison has been in place for about seven years. Sixty percent of the harvest last season was bulls. Harvest models predict that the population targets could be met by the end of the five-year management plan if current harvest levels were maintained and the harvest was more evenly balanced between bulls and cows. The 2013 fall hunt along highway corridors increased harvest rates and increased highway safety by directing bison off the highway corridors.

It is also worth noting that wolves have begun to prey on bison, which may help curb the growth of the herd in coming years. Interestingly, wood bison is a species at risk, listed under federal legislation. They were reintroduced into southwestern Yukon beginning in the late-1880s as part of a national recovery effort to restore populations.

The Aishihik wood bison herd is one of only nine free-ranging wood bison populations in Canada and the only one with a management plan in place. Additional flights to locate collared bison have improved the accuracy of the map available to harvesters describing bison locations. The Department of Environment finalized research on potential competition for food and habitat between bison and other ungulates. A key finding was that little competition exists among bison, moose and caribou.

Obviously, from those numbers it is clear that the bison herd continues to grow despite the fact that it is being actively managed and actively hunted by Yukoners. As of April 1, the availability will be there for non-resident hunters through special guiding to hunt bison. The current trends appear to me that more liberal measures may be needed to curb the growth of the herd, but that is something that we will do through our management practices and regulatory regimes, including discussions with Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the bison management team, the bison technical team and the officials in the Department of Environment. In some senses, the bison population is good story. It is a species at risk federally, but locally it is most certainly a herd that is thriving — a species that is doing very well in the Yukon. As our most recent data indicates, it's a species that doesn't appear to be creating much undue impact on other species, such as ungulates. I hope that is a sufficient update for the member.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for those responses.

Earlier in this sitting, when the Chair brought forward a motion for debate, I was always so close to being able to talk about it. So my question for the minister is: What role does he have in the waste diversion for recycling that is affecting Raven Recycling and P&M right now?

If he can just separate the Department of Environment from Community Services, then I will make sure I focus on what he's able to answer.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At a high level, I would say that the distinction between the departments relates to the roles that they play. Environment is the regulator, as opposed to Community Services being — for lack of a better term — the boots on the ground. They are dealing with the management

of solid waste throughout the territory in a very literal way and hands-on way, and the Department of Environment is more focused on the regulatory aspects. We administer the *Environment Act* and the regulations pursuant to the *Environment Act*, including the beverage container regulation and the designated material regulation, which are currently out for public consultation. I believe they close on the 21st of this month. That is the distinction between the departments and I sense that there are further questions about our roles, so I will defer to the member.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that initial groundwork.

When Yukon government, last December, matched the city's diversion credits of \$75 a tonne, was that coming through Community Services, through Environment, or from general budget, and can he speak to that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Through the regulation, Environment Yukon sets the rates at which designated materials are charged, which beverage containers are charged and the flow of money into the recycling fund. The recycling fund itself is now managed by the Department of Community Services, and the funding for the diversion credits are provided through the Department of Community Services as well. Our role in Environment is strictly a regulatory one, where we administer the regulations pursuant to the *Environment Act*.

Ms. White: I was so close to being able to use half of those notes, but I will leave them behind and concentrate on the review of the recycling system that is open for public input until very soon — November 21, I think the minister said.

It is interesting to know that it has been 22 years since this was opened up — credit to the minister for bringing it forward and opening up the topics for discussion and the products that we can look toward paying an upfront fee for and then not having to pay it to dispose of them. A lot of people in this House are older than I am and they all remember the time before tires had a recycling fee — just regular car tires. I remember being a kid and there being lots of tires in the woods, and then it seems to have eased off a bit. That has to do with the initial fee when we started recycling tires. It's exciting to know that the tire rim size is increasing.

It is interesting that, under the *Environment Act* regulations, when it talks about the review of the recycling system, it almost seems disingenuous, because what we are really talking about is reviewing the beverage container regulations and the designated material regulations. Those are the ones that collect money, but recycling as a whole has a lot of things that don't collect that money, which I think is problematic, and that has kind of led us to this current position.

Under the review of the recycling system, there were a couple of questions I had that had been flagged by not just the recyclers themselves — by both the organizations and by people.

We have the increased surcharges of the beverage containers, which I think is totally reasonable. The concern now is that we're going to classify them as big and as small,

so one litre or less and more than one litre. I was wondering if the department had thought about what that would do to wine bottles, which now would be considered small, as opposed to large — given the fact that they are one of the largest generators of income for both the recyclers.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is quite right that there are a number of materials out there that are recyclable that aren't covered by these regulations, and that's the way it is. I don't believe it's disingenuous to say it's a review of the regime. I think this is the regulatory regime, as we have it right now, so we are reviewing it, in that sense.

The specific question about wine bottles is a very valid one, and it's one that has come up through the public consultation, that folks have noticed that some categories of alcohol containers will see a decrease, as opposed to other products that would see an increase. We may, at the end of this, based on what we hear through the public consultation, take a different tack with liquor bottles. That's something we're considering and something that came up through the public consultation, or has come up through public consultation, that we're aware of, and it's something we're willing to consider — or reconsider, actually.

The intent behind the initial decision to have the 1,000-millilitre threshold and two clear categories was for simplicity.

That was something we had heard previously — that the system works better if it's very clear what is involved and what isn't, and what is characterized as what. Right now, there are five different categories that depend on what the substance is that the container is carrying, and how big, and a variety of different containers.

Simplicity was our intention, but we recognize that there is still a different role for liquor and we may consider making a change to our proposed changes to accommodate the need to treat alcohol a bit differently.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that acknowledgement. I had an animated conversation with a constituent who, when reading through it, understood that products of more than one litre — like dairy products more than one litre — were going to cost 40 cents, and then how could we possibly be putting that on? I explained that, from my interpretation of what the consultation said, that was going to be at the 15 cents. His assertion was that we should just triple everything on liquor bottles and let that cover everything else, which is definitely an opinion.

I'm glad to know that the minister and the department have been hearing some of those concerns. I think the population as a whole would be supportive of the changes toward what he just mentioned before.

It's really exciting to see the electronic products included in the consultation. He and I have had conversations with the EPR — I believe that is the abbreviation — but we talked about how that could change the packaging. I think it's really important that we move toward the pre-pay on the recycling fee — maybe if the minister just wants to expand and tell us more about this, and how he hopes to see it work in the future.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is asking about whether or not we are going toward extended producer responsibility. What we are doing with these changes is extending, or changing, our current stewardship model, rather than going to a pure extended producer responsibility model. We chose that because we thought it would be an easier transition from our current system. It is indeed possible and, as of the spring of this year, it is now legally possible for there to be an extended producer responsibility model in Yukon. Previously there had been a legislative prohibition to that. I imagine it was unintended, but there was in fact a legislative issue that prevented there from being an EPR system in Yukon.

This is an expansion of our current stewardship program. We thought it was a reasonable next step for our recycling regime. There are some — as I'm sure the members have encountered on the doorstep and otherwise — who believe we should have gone further and added more materials. There are some who believe that we have gone too far and too fast. We are trying to find a balance and we think we have, but that's why we consult publicly and that's why we reach out to Yukoners to hear what their thoughts and what their opinions are about these changes.

The member is quite right that the dairy issue is one that is always brought up as being of particular interest. That's why we chose the proposed change of including all dairy products under the lower threshold, regardless of their size. A four-litre container of milk would be classified under the below-1,000-millilitre threshold, despite its size.

There would be a limited impact on the cost of dairy, especially for those Yukon communities that are more remote for Whitehorse and face higher grocery prices than in Whitehorse.

We're not moving to EPR now. We may in the future. At this point we're extending our stewardship program to include additional products and that's where we are.

Ms. White: I apologize. I didn't make myself very clear before — understanding that this has nothing to do with the extended producer responsibilities but we've talked about it previously before this consultation was mentioned that it was coming forward.

When the consultation is done, how long does the department expect to see the regulations in place that will have these stewardship programs and the costs at the till for the recycling happen? When does he imagine that will be an over-the-till event.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Once the consultation concludes, there is a process by which we review what we heard. We typically release the *What We Heard* document or create a *What We Heard* document and release it. I anticipate we will probably do something like that with this consultation.

Following that, there is a normal process for regulation development that includes the drafting of regulations, their submission through the Cabinet process, and ultimately their approval and publication for the availability of Yukoners. That process usually takes some amount of time. I'm not at

liberty at this point to guess how long it will take, but it usually doesn't take too, too long.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his patience today and, again, the officials for flipping through the binder furiously to find out the questions I have just decided I was going to ask. I have just one last question before I pass it to my colleague from Klondike — and just to follow up, mostly just because I'm so excited about your answer.

What needs to be done to encourage the department to ask for testing of the piscine re-ovirus, or the infectious salmon anemia? Are there things that locally can be done? What can we do to help that decision be made to test our salmon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That would be a responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, so I will consult with department officials to determine whether or not, and how, we would convey that sentiment to DFO.

Ms. White: I'm just going to keep going with this one, just so I'm clear.

I do realize that it's the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that has to do the testing, but it's the Department of Environment that has to request that it be tested. What can we do to encourage the department to ask for that testing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What I'll do is consult with officials and determine whether or not, and how, we would make that request to DFO.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the officials from the department for their time today. I don't have very many more questions after my colleague from the NDP, but I do have a few issues that weren't touched upon that, hopefully, we can get some comments on here today.

I'm going to start with the hunting licences. This summer, the Ross River Dena Council filed a statement of claim, seeking declaration that the Yukon government has a duty to consult and accommodate RRDC when it comes to hunting licences and tags.

The last that we heard, this was going to court and we are just wondering if there is a status update from the minister? I only have one other question on that — maybe I will wait and see what the response is from the minister first.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct and I am sure he has seen my statement on that issue. Since then, all that I can report is that Yukon government's statement of defence was filed on September 2 and a case management conference held on October 2. The Yukon Fish and Game Association is seeking to intervene and that application will be heard by the court on December 3. That information may not be completely up to date, so I will confirm it in the days to come, but the most recent information I have right now is that the application will be heard on December 3. Document disclosure was due on October 24 and a further case management conference is set for December 15. The Ross River area referenced in the July 31, 2014 statement of claim corresponds to the same boundaries as the Ross River class one notification area identified under the *Quartz Mining Act*.

That is the most recent information I have. Officials have indicated that may have changed very recently, but that is the most recent information I have at this time.

Mr. Silver: I thank the minister for that answer. It does beg the question about outfitters and their trips. A lot of times outfitters will book their trips years in advance and this is big business in the Yukon.

What concerns does the minister have here? What is his department doing to quell the potential drop in outfitters' trips over the next few years in light of this claim? Is that a conversation that he and his department officials are having? If so, are there any plans to help in that regard?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I indicated in my statement on that issue, we are hoping that there will be no immediate impact on resident, non-resident or First Nation hunters, so for those non-resident hunters who are guided through outfitting, we don't anticipate any change on it at this time. Obviously the outcomes of the case could change that.

So we are not doing anything different. At this point, we have told resident hunters and non-resident hunters alike that they should continue as normal, and if there is any change necessary, we will communicate that when we become aware of it.

Mr. Silver: It's kind of a good segue, I guess. I have a couple of questions from some constituents having concerns about hunting quotas in concessions. Are there some areas of concessions where there are no quotas for sheep, for example? In other words, can an outfitter shoot an unlimited number of a particular animal in a particular concession?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I believe only one concession in the territory has quotas for sheep. I believe it is concession 17 — concession 17 is the only concession that has quotas for sheep.

Mr. Silver: To confirm, an outfitter can shoot an unlimited number of a particular animal in a particular concession.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are quotas for a number of different species. The member asked about an unlimited number of animals. The quotas for various species are determined through the quota process. In some cases, an outfitter can harvest a variety of animals, but in most cases there are quotas for moose, caribou and others. I would note that if an outfitter was to wipe out the population of their concession, it wouldn't be very good business for them and would probably be a negative aspect to their business carrying forward. The quota-setting process is pretty well-publicized and it is available on our website.

Mr. Silver: Is there a quota system in place for most or all animals? The minister mentioned how the public can find out more information. Would his government website provide for the public how many animals are harvested by an outfitter?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, I believe there are quotas for most animals, to answer the member's question. If any individual has an interest in the number of animals harvested anywhere in the Yukon, they can contact the Department of Environment to get that data.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answers from the minister. I'm going to turn to the Watson Lake district office. I asked about this in Question Period in the spring, but I would like to get back to this again. If the minister can give me an update, what is the expected final cost of the project and when will it be completed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that staff has now moved into the building so it is completed. There are a few other small issues that are being dealt with but my understanding is that the project is completed. Of course, the actual construction of the project was managed by Highways and Public Works, so the data about that is available in that department. I am given to understand that the project came in with the anticipated budget and on time and that the building is actually quite nice and I look forward to visiting it myself.

Mr. Silver: I have one more topic left and that's the Atlin Lake campground. The money for the Atlin Lake campground project has been moved to next year. Is the campground going to be built next year? Also, after a few delays, the *Environment Act* audit report was finally released earlier this fall. What actions will the department be taking now, based on the report?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Atlin Lake campground, in this budget that is before us now, we are elapsing \$1.4 million.

We did spend \$70,000 on some fish survey work for Atlin Lake, despite the fact that we are not moving forward with the Atlin campground immediately.

As to the member's question of whether or not it will be built next year, I don't know. It's obviously an issue that will have to be resolved through the court case that has been brought forward by the Taku River Tlingit.

With regard to the *Environment Act* audit, yes, it was posted on-line a few weeks ago and it comes up with a number of recommendations for increased collaboration between departments. Obviously, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services and other departments are noted in that audit. A number of actions are planned to respond to those recommendations. Some of the recommendations have been dealt with already; others, like the suggestion that MOUs — sorry, Madam Chair, I was a bit distracted.

Other recommendations like those that indicate that we should enter into, or refresh, memoranda of understanding with other departments we will undertake in due course and look forward to working with other departments to respond to those recommendations.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Klondike for those questions. I was going to wait for line-by-line, but I will take the opportunity for my last one. Can the minister give us a status update on the Conrad campground and where we're at in the process and what the next steps are?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: YESAB has concluded its assessment and provided us with recommendations for moving forward with that campground. The next step would be to develop a decision document, which would respond to

the recommendations from YESAB. That work is underway right now.

Environment Yukon is the decision body that will issue the decision document, and I hope — well, we have time limits, obviously, to respond to YESAB's recommendations. I believe it is 30 days from the time of the issuance of the recommendations, so we should have that decision document sometime before mid-December.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate? We will proceed to line-by-line debate.

Hold one moment please.

Ms. White: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Deputy Clerk for her assistance.

Madam Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines of Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried as required. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: There is unanimous consent.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$726,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures underexpenditure in the amount of \$426,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$300,000 agreed to Department of Environment agreed to

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon 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: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil*

Tax Act, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have the report of 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 now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.