



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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33rd Legislature

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## HANSARD

**Monday, December 8, 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**

## CABINET MINISTERS

### NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

<b>Hon. Darrell Pasloski</b>	Mountainview	<b>Premier</b> Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
<b>Hon. Elaine Taylor</b>	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
<b>Hon. Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
<b>Hon. Doug Graham</b>	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
<b>Hon. Scott Kent</b>	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
<b>Hon. Currie Dixon</b>	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
<b>Hon. Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
<b>Hon. Mike Nixon</b>	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

<b>Darius Elias</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

<b>Elizabeth Hanson</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
<b>Jan Stick</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
<b>Kevin Barr</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
<b>Lois Moorcroft</b>	Copperbelt South
<b>Jim Tredger</b>	Mayo-Tatchun
<b>Kate White</b>	Takhini-Kopper King

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, December 8, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

## TRIBUTES

### In remembrance of Elaine Wyatt

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I rise today for a tribute to Elaine Wyatt.

“In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it”.

Elaine Wyatt, who left us on Wednesday, November 26, was very fond of these words by Marianne Williamson. They spoke to her about how she felt about her family, her community and her territory. Elaine was known as a woman with determination, honesty and the ability to see the big picture. She was also considered to be enormously warm and loving. Her love for her family and her friends was known to be unconditional and fierce.

Elaine was born on February 22, 1957, to Ben and the late Margaret Richie in Chatham, Ontario. She was the best friend and beloved wife of Mark C. Wyatt and loving mother to Mark’s children, Colleen Saur of Kelowna, B.C., Jason and Juanita Wyatt and Shauna and Dave Jacobs, all of Whitehorse. She was the loving grandmother to Alexandra, Cassidy, Kiara, Alexander and Sara.

Elaine Wyatt was an adventurer, who moved around Canada until she fell deeply and permanently in love with her beautiful Yukon. She served as the manager of the Yukon Housing Corporation’s Carmacks office for over 15 years. Her amazing organizational and leadership abilities were put to good use by the RCMP and the territorial government, until it was obvious that politics were her true calling. She served three years on the Carmacks municipal council before becoming mayor in 2006.

Her passion and vision drew her to run for the Yukon Party in the 2011 territorial election. She volunteered for many organizations and committees, notably as President of the Association of Yukon Communities. She was recently recognized for the prestigious Hanseatic Award, nominated by her peers for her outstanding contributions to the advancement of Yukon municipal government.

She is also remembered for her work in bringing the voice of the north to numerous provincial, territorial and federal government tables. Mrs. Wyatt was a great Canadian and worked tirelessly to serve her community. Elaine was also a humble recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal. She will be remembered as an enduring figure in

municipal politics and for her tenacity and vision as a community leader.

I would like to ask the House to acknowledge her many family members and friends who are here with us today: Elaine’s husband Mark, daughter Shauna Wyatt, daughter-in-law Juanita Wyatt, sister Marsha Richie, and sister Jane Kovar. As well, we have some friends from the community: Lee Bodie, Cory Bellmore, Kelly Skookum, Pat McKenny and Amy Faughnan.

I also would like to recognize in the gallery a number of members of the Community Services team, as well as His Worship Dan Curtis, and Whitehorse manager, Christine Smith. I would like to ask everyone to join me in welcoming them here today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Tredger:** I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Elaine Wyatt. Elaine was a remarkable woman and a true champion for her family, for the people of Carmacks and indeed for all the people of the Yukon. Elaine touched the lives of many. This was quite evident from the stories shared at her service on Friday — some stories shared publicly but many shared around the tables during the lunch following. There were stories of her strength and stories of her character and of her dedication to service. These stories and these lines appeared again and again.

Eddie Skookum, former Chief of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation spoke of Elaine’s belief in the importance of working together and how they worked together again and again for the good of all of the people of Carmacks. He recounted how the Village of Carmacks and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation was one of the first jurisdictions to hold joint council meetings and how Elaine was a driving force — a force not to be denied — in ensuring the meetings were held on a regular basis — her determination that Carmacks and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation would go forward together.

Elaine had a commitment to people. She realized that we must set aside our differences to work together around building a sustainable community, sustainable relationships, partnerships and friendships.

Much of Elaine’s focus was on kids. A former RCMP officer recounted stories of Elaine’s commitment and caring, her coming out late at night, her fighting for the children of Carmacks and the extra hours she put in to help kids in need. It bears repeating: Elaine put community and kids first. We can all learn from that.

Elaine took her positions very seriously and worked many hours to ensure that her job was a job well done. Elaine has been a councillor and a mayor of Carmacks, a member and president of the Association of Yukon Communities and she represented Yukon on a national stage. Her commitment and dedication to community and responsibility meant many long days, evening meetings, trips and time away from family.

I would like to thank Elaine's family and especially Mark for supporting her in her civic roles and duties. You were a part of Elaine's successes and her tribute is yours. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.  
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

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to seek public input on changes to the *Students Financial Assistance Act* for fair, equitable and fiscally responsible methods to enhance access to financial assistance for current and future Yukon post-secondary students.

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

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Before we go to Question Period, the Chair would like to make a statement regarding the point of order raised last Thursday during Question Period by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. During Question Period, the Member for Riverdale South asked the Minister of Health and Social Services a series of questions about patient discharge planning. In responding to the member's main question, the Minister of Health and Social Services said that he would undertake to provide an answer to the Member for Riverdale South. First, however, he would take some time to, in his words, "correct the record" with respect to statements made by the Member for Riverdale South during discussion of Motion No. 808, which took place last Wednesday.

For the record, Motion No. 808 did not deal with patient discharge planning, and the Member for Riverdale South did not mention patient discharge planning during her speech on that motion. The minister continued in the same vein in response to the first supplementary question from the Member for Riverdale South. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun then rose on a point of order, citing Specific Rule No. 9 under the Guidelines for Oral Question Period. The rule states: "A reply to a question should be as brief as possible, relevant to the question asked, and should not provoke debate."

The Chair, at the time, ruled that there was no point of order, as the Chair could not know what the minister was going to say until he had finished. Only then could the Chair know how the minister's response was tied to the question. Having reviewed the Blues and seeing the minister's words in their full context, the Chair now concurs with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. The minister's response did violate Specific Rule No. 9.

A minister's response is rarely ruled out of order. In responding to oral questions, ministers are given wide latitude, and it is difficult for the Chair to judge the content of

responses during Question Period. However, in keeping with Specific Rule No. 9, a minister's response must be relevant to the question.

By relevant, the Chair means that the minister's response must address the same subject as the question asked. A response to a question is not an opportunity for a minister to speak about any subject that may have been raised in the House. If the minister wishes to discuss statements made during debate on Motion No. 808, he can do so if the motion is called for debate a second time. If appropriate, matters raised by Motion No. 808 might also be addressed in Committee of the Whole during consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services. However, in order for Question Period to serve its purpose, ministers must confine their responses to the subject matter of the question put to them.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: YESAA process

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, for weeks the Premier said the four controversial amendments contained in Bill S-6, opposed by Yukon First Nations, came from the federal government, but that they had the full support of the Yukon Party government.

Last Monday, both the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Member of Parliament for Yukon said that the Premier had proposed all four amendments to YESAA that have resulted in growing uncertainty.

Then on Friday, in a letter to the editor, the Premier told Yukoners that his government only proposed two of the contentious amendments. It seems the federal Conservatives and their territorial franchise got their messages mixed up. The Premier's speaking points are all over the map, so perhaps the Premier can provide some clarity to this House.

Did he propose four amendments, two amendments or no amendments? What is it, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I think I have answered this question in the past. All of our comments that we made toward the proposed Bill S-6 are to ensure that our assessment process is consistent with other jurisdictions, which allows this territory to ensure that we can remain competitive. Remaining competitive means we have a greater opportunity to attract investment dollars to this territory, which creates jobs and business opportunities for Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** I guess the Premier doesn't want to answer the question.

Last week, the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada demonstrated that he had absolutely no understanding of the UFA when he asserted that Yukon First Nation governments were "not real governments". Last Friday, in his letter to the editor, the Premier followed the federal minister's lead and demonstrated that he has absolutely no understanding of the devolution transfer agreement or the final agreements when he tried to argue that the proposed YESAA amendments would allow

delegation of authority to the territorial minister that's somehow consistent with devolution. The DTA makes it clear that devolution cannot infringe on the final agreements and that these amendments to YESAA are not consistent with the final agreements.

How can Yukoners trust a Premier who clearly doesn't understand either the final agreements or the DTA?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** What's clear is that the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't understand Bill S-6, that's for certain, Mr. Speaker.

After the five-year review, Canada, as part of their action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes, began a consultation on improving northern regulatory regimes. The Government of Canada requested comments from First Nations and from the Yukon government. Both Yukon government and First Nations provided those comments. Did we get everything that we asked for in Bill S-6? No, we did not. But what we are confident in is that we feel that the federal government did consider our comments prior to tabling their amendments in Bill S-6. As we know, this is federal legislation.

I have to also comment on the Leader of the NDP Party. Contrary to her allegations, section 4 of YESAA remains intact, which clearly states that in the event of inconsistency or a conflict between the final agreement and this act, the agreement prevails to the extent of the inconsistency or the conflict.

That is not included in Bill S-6 simply because there is no change to that section of the act. It remains in force. It always has been in force, guaranteeing First Nation final agreements have the final say.

**Ms. Hanson:** I am really curious as to what else the Premier asked for. You know, this Premier keeps repeating that these amendments will make Yukon consistent with other jurisdictions. De-coded, that means that Yukon's environmental assessment legislation will join the ranks of legislation gutted by the federal Conservatives, like the *Fisheries Act*, CEAA, and the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*.

Yukon businesses recognize that the current YESAA process provides certainty. It gives them the social licence necessary to prosper in Yukon. Last week, the presidents of two Yukon mining corporations publicly denounced the Yukon government's support of Bill S-6. Opposition to amendments for YESAA is growing and the Yukon government's arguments are refuted on a daily basis. Rather than simply changing his speaking points around, it is time for this government to rebuild relationships with Yukon First Nations, industry and citizens.

Will the Premier recognize that his amendments to YESAA are harmful to Yukon and pull his support for Bill S-6?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Again, this government requested and asked for amendments to our assessment process that would ensure that our assessment process was consistent with other jurisdictions, such as Nunavut and Northwest Territories. All of our comments that we provided to the

Government of Canada we also shared with First Nations, beginning all the way back in late 2012, Mr. Speaker, and again in early 2014. First Nations were fully aware of all of those comments. When it comes to consultation, it is my understanding that, through the five-year review, the federal government provided Yukon First Nations \$647,000 to provide their input through the consultation process and an additional \$100,000 to provide their input through consultations on Canada's vision to improve northern regulatory regimes.

#### **Question re: Peel watershed land use plan**

**Ms. White:** Last week, the Yukon Supreme Court struck down the Yukon Party government's unilateral and illegal Peel plan, leaving the Peel watershed with no land use plan in place. In the past, after far too many delays and thousands of staked speculative claims when the status of the Peel watershed was up in the air, this government finally put an interim staking withdrawal on the area until the land use planning process was completed. Here we are again, and the future of the Peel watershed is once again unclear.

Will this government do the responsible thing and reinstate the interim staking withdrawal for the Peel watershed area until the land use plan is implemented?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As the member opposite stated on December 2, 2014, a decision was handed down with respect to the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*. The Yukon government is considering the court's decision before determining what our next steps will be, and that is a position we were in last week and it remains the position that we are in as of today.

**Ms. White:** The Peel watershed interim staking ban was put in place only after thousands of speculative staking claims were made because of this government's inaction. Now we are in the same position and it appears that this government has not yet learned from its past mistakes.

In successive news releases, this very same government justified the interim withdrawal of staking in the Peel by saying — and I quote: "...does not predetermine any outcomes in the planning process."

Justice Veale told the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations to return to consultation on the final recommended Peel plan. The responsible thing to do to prevent speculative staking is to again implement a temporary staking withdrawal, and according to the government's own logic, doing so would not predetermine any outcome.

Will the Yukon Party stand by its previous statements and reinstate the temporary staking withdrawal of the Peel watershed?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** As I mentioned in my initial response, we are considering the court's decision before determining what the next steps will be. This is an extremely important case, obviously, and many Yukoners have opinions with respect to the Peel watershed on one side or the other of it.

We are not prepared to comment further on this issue until our review is complete and we consider all the

implications that this decision will have on land use planning and the economy of the territory.

**Ms. White:** This government implemented an interim staking withdrawal after thousands of speculative staking claims were made in the Peel when some people realized that they could take advantage of this government's incompetence. The speculative claims were made in the early years of the Peel land use planning process were disrespectful to honest investors and the Yukon public and they were an embarrassment to the Yukon government.

Now the current government is practically asking for speculative staking to return to the Peel and take advantage of the position that this government's arrogance has put the Yukon in. In the interest of avoiding another speculative staking rush, will this government commit to reinstating the interim withdrawal on staking in the Peel until the fate of the watershed is decided?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** To repeat previous responses, we are considering the court's decision before determining what our next steps will be. This decision requires careful consideration and we need to have officials and our legal counsel complete the review and we need to consider all of the implications that this decision will have, not only on land use planning and on future land use planning exercises, but also on the economy of the territory.

#### **Question re: YESAA process**

**Mr. Silver:** For months, this government has been insisting that there has been adequate consultation on changes to Bill S-6 that are now before the House of Commons. For the longest time, our Member of Parliament said the same thing — that no input from the public was required and changes could simply just be approved. Last week, our MP changed his mind and said that hearing from the public might be a good idea after all.

I believe that Yukoners should have a say on the changes that are being proposed, including the four put forth by this Yukon Party government. I believe that the House of Commons committee examining these changes should hold a public hearing here in the territory.

Does the Premier support that, and has he made a request to the Government of Canada?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As I have spoken in this House many times, this government supports assessment legislation that is consistent with other jurisdictions across the country, ensuring that we have the ability to attract jobs through investment. I will remind the Leader of the Liberal Party — because it appears that he may not understand the process as I have also articulated — that these amendments to the proposed Bill S-6 — it is federal legislation. Yukon First Nations and Yukon government have been consulted and, as a result of that consultation, the federal government tabled Bill S-6 amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. It is their decision how they move forward in terms of committee hearings and their consultation. As an invested party, we have provided our comments and we

look forward to the due process as described by the federal government.

**Mr. Silver:** I am taking from the Premier's answer that that is a no. He did not make a request to the Government of Canada.

This spring, I asked the Premier to hold public consultations on changes to YESAA and to Bill S-6 — to actually ask Yukoners what they thought and what they wanted. I warned that the government and their go-it-alone approach would, once again, lead to strained relations with First Nation governments. The Premier ignored my requests and we have seen this predictable result of this government's unilateral actions.

First Nation governments do not support the changes. The resource industry is urging the government to fix this mess that it created with its last-minute amendments. Last week, Yukoners were treated to an extraordinary spectacle of the Premier publicly fighting with the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and our own MP over this entire mess.

What steps is the Premier taking to mend fences with Yukon First Nation governments over last week's events?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I think the question is: How will the Leader of the Liberal Party and the MLA for Klondike answer to his constituents when he states that the amendments to YESAA as a result of Bill S-6 are regressive. I'm sure that all those people listening — and in the minutes — and that all the placer miners and all the families that are supported through the placer industry will be very curious to hear how their representative feels that these amendments that ensure consistency — that he finds them as regressive.

**Mr. Silver:** This Premier frequently tells Yukoners about the benefits of his strong relationships with the Government of Canada. Last week, Yukoners watched this Premier get thrown under the bus by the federal minister and by our MP over the four last-minute amendments to Bill S-6. The federal minister was obviously tired of taking the blame for this government's poorly-thought-out last-minute actions to the bill — talk about regressive. So much for the special relationship that this government says that it has with Ottawa.

Will the Premier do everyone a favour — First Nation governments, Yukoners in general, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, mining investors, and himself — and just withdraw these amendments?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The consultation on Canada's action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes started in 2012 and concluded in the early part of this year. Through that process, we provided a number of comments, as did First Nations. We shared all our comments with First Nations, but we did suggest two of those four amendments. They were around policy direction and delegation. The third amendment was a federal government amendment, as a result of seeking clarification by this government, and the fourth one on timelines was put forward by the federal government.

Do we support all these amendments? Yes, we do, simply because they ensure that our process is comparable to other jurisdictions, which allows us that opportunity to seek investment to create jobs for Yukoners.

**Question re: School bus contractor obligations**

**Mr. Barr:** Last week, I asked about the terms of the contract for the school bus services in Whitehorse and the communities in rural Yukon. The ministers told me they didn't have the information at their fingertips, but would be getting it. Of particular concern to me are the training and certification of the school bus drivers, including passing an RCMP security check, having a valid first-aid certificate, having completed a government-approved defensive driving course or providing a copy of their driver's abstract each year.

Now that the minister has had time to review the contract terms, can the minister tell us what steps are being taken to ensure the contractor is respecting its obligations?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** As the member opposite has alluded to, I want to assure all Yukoners that the safety of our students is of utmost importance, both at school and when they're being bused to school. It's our number-one priority, of course. We continue to work with all of our respective contractors and all our respective stakeholders when it comes to students who are inside the schools and outside the schools, to ensure that safety is upheld at every turn.

There are a number of provisions contained within the busing contract when it comes to ensuring the safe transportation of students to and fro, and that includes that all school buses have to be in compliance with CSA standards, the *Motor Vehicles Act*, and all of our respective laws and regulations. Also, buses have to be inspected in accordance with the commercial vehicle inspection program. Again, they have to be equipped and operated in such a manner as to ensure the safety of our students.

This also includes ensuring that there is COR certification. It also ensures that drivers have to have RCMP security checks annually, a valid standard first-aid certificate and again, having successfully completed government-approved safe driving courses — and the list goes on.

So of course we continue to work with the contractor.

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

**Mr. Barr:** We're not asking — we know what the obligations are. Is the minister aware that these obligations are not being met? What are they doing about it? The request for proposal also required that the school buses in Whitehorse be a model year 2010 or newer, yet drivers have told us — drivers have told us — along with this, that these buses are not all 2010 or newer. There are older ones transporting our students. Drivers are also reporting mechanical issues that raise questions about the safety of our children.

Can the minister confirm that the terms of this school bus contract are being respected and can he indicate whether or not buses older than 2010 are being used?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, of course I rely on the good work of our officials within the departments. Certainly their job is to respect the full compliance of all of our respective contracts. I know the member opposite may not understand that, but it's very much — I want to reassure that again, the safety of our students inside and out of our schools is of utmost importance. Mr. Speaker, we have officials within

the Department of Highways and Public Works, the Department of Education in terms of working to comply fully with the requirements of the contract regulations.

If the member opposite would like to answer the question, then perhaps he should stand up. I can actually refer to that — in fact, we continue to work with our busing contractor on a routine basis to ensure that Takhini Transport, in this particular case, ensures that all the required information is provided — that we continue to work with the contractor to ensure that everything is complied with.

**Question re: Mobile home owners**

**Ms. White:** A mobile home owner was recently told to upgrade the outside of their home or risk eviction. The homeowner bought the materials required for the repairs, but the mobile park owner had failed to stabilize the bank behind their home and the bank had sloughed up the back wall of the trailer. The presence of utilities in the ground of this unstable bank meant that no contractor would touch the project. This mobile home owner has since been evicted and must leave the park by March. It doesn't seem fair, does it, Mr. Speaker?

Mobile home owners need protection which arises from their unique situation. They own their buildings, but they rent the land. Mobile home owners need more protection than traditional renters because they aren't traditional renters. They own the building they call home. Despite their names, you can't just pick up a mobile home and drive away.

Mr. Speaker, does the government agree that mobile home owners are a distinct class of tenants because they own the buildings they call home?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In fact, if the member would read the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, which was passed by this Assembly, there are specific provisions in there that apply to mobile home owners. The new act requires landlords to provide at least three months' notice of an increase to rent, prohibits increases in the first year of tenancy and also prohibits a landlord from requiring a tenant to move a mobile home during the months of December, January and February.

Specific examples like the member is bringing forth to this Assembly, if accurate — again, it's quite the story she told — but I am not familiar with that particular situation so I can't speak to that particular allegation she is bringing forward in Question Period.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, the expectations between mobile home owners and landlords are different from traditional renters. Renting a room in a house or an apartment in a building is not the same as renting a piece of land where you installed a house you own. You just need to drive through a mobile home park to understand the challenges faced by mobile home owners. Unpaved roads, insufficient drainage and poor landscaping lead to problems of water damage and other structural problems to some owners' homes and there is almost nothing that mobile home owners can do about it under the current legal framework that stacks the deck in favour of the park owner.

Mobile home owners need a unique classification so that both landlords and tenants in mobile home parks can have a

fair deal. Why won't the government commit to developing specific classifications for mobile home pad rent tenancy under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** As I've reminded the member before, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* emerged from years of work that began, first of all, with an all-party committee, which included representatives from the NDP. Following their report being completed, that led to public consultation related to the development of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and of course, most recently, consultation to enable us to move forward with the regulations.

As I reminded the member before, the legislation does not allow us to do what the member is asking for and we are continuing to focus on the regulations to implement this legislation. Again, we are acting on an area of legislation that is over 50 years old.

The member is — I know she's very passionate on this subject, but I would remind the member that the work that was done first of all by the all-party committee and then by officials was aimed at striking a fair balance between landlords and tenants. All who were involved did their best to come up with their sense of what a fair balance was. I know the member disagrees with their work and doesn't support it, but again, the act itself does not allow us to classify mobile home owners in the way that she has asked for in the past in the House and in the correspondence to me.

**Ms. White:** I am passionate about fairness for mobile home owners. Just last week, I tabled a petition in this House calling on the government to listen to hundreds of mobile home owners who are being forced into skyrocketing pad rental increases among many, many other issues.

The government consulted condo owners ahead of the upcoming *Condominium Act*. When was the last time the Yukon Party government actually reached out to mobile home owners and consulted them about their situation? Mobile home owners are getting organized and their voices deserve to be heard. Will the government commit to holding consultations with mobile home owners to get a better understanding of the challenges that they face on a daily basis?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I think the question would be: Where was the member during the work that was being done on the act itself? That would have been the time to bring forward the concern she's asking for — the requested changes to the act. Again, we've acted in an area where the legislation was over 50 years old. Three terms of NDP governments did nothing to modernize this legislation. We formed an all-party committee. Following the report of that committee, that led to the additional consultation with the public, including mobile home owners, who had the opportunity to contribute their views to the public consultation. The efforts from everyone, including the members who served on the all-party committee to the work of officials reviewing consultation with the public and with stakeholders — all were attempting to come up with a fair balance in the act between the rights of landlords and the rights of tenants. It's unfortunate that the member not only

disagrees with that work but clearly doesn't support or respect the work done by previous members of this Assembly or by officials.

Again, we're focused on taking the next step as we were tasked to do, which is bringing forward the regulations that went out for consultation this spring. Everyone, including mobile home owners, had the opportunity to provide their views.

#### Question re: Keno City mine development

**Mr. Tredger:** Alexco's original proposal to YESAB for the Mayo-Keno mine site included a temporary mill, which was approved. The residents of Keno City had reservations regarding the mill, as it was close to the town and they were worried about the dust and noise. However, they accepted it with the understanding that it would be temporary. They believed the YESAB recommendations would mitigate some of the effects. In Alexco's most recent YESAA application, the designation for the mill had changed from a temporary mill to a permanent district mill. This government has made it clear with their support of Bill S-6 that they want the ability to modify the licences and terms of projects in the Yukon without going through YESAA.

Does this government believe that a change from a five-year temporary mill, producing 250 tonnes a day, to a 400-tonnes-a-day permanent mill is a minor amendment?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Again, the Alexco project that is located in the community of Keno City is in temporary shutdown. They did go through the environmental assessment process for the Flame and Moth project and recently emerged from that process with a decision document that allows the project to proceed with certain terms and conditions.

I think it is important, when we talk about the Alexco project, that, since its inception, it has been to YESAA nine times. This is one of those projects where we have heard from the project proponent that he feels that this is excessive — it is very excessive. It is a very costly process as well.

Of course no one wants to have effects that are socio-economic or environmental that cannot be mitigated, but again, when it comes to this project — nine times through the assessment process. I believe that the number I have heard from the proponent is that for every three months of production, he has been in permitting for two months.

I would ask the NDP if they think that that is fair.

**Mr. Tredger:** YESAA is a thorough process that involves various stakeholders. In the decision document on Alexco's most recent YESAA application for the Flame and Moth project, of the 35 recommendations made by the YESAB, the Yukon government removed 10 recommendations, changed 17 and accepted only eight of them. Mr. Speaker, 27 of the 35 recommendations were removed or changed. Stakeholders and interveners expect that their input will be reflected in the final decision document. Having the minister change or remove so many of the recommendations after an independent and transparent assessment undermines the confidence of the entire process.



How does the minister justify undermining the independent and transparent assessment process by removing or changing 27 of 35 of YESAB's recommendations?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** The YESAA process is very clear. In this case, the designated office would put forward a recommendation to the decision bodies with respect to this particular project. The decision body has the ability to accept, reject or vary the recommendation that is put forward by YESAA. In this case, the Yukon government, as the decision body, chose to modify some of the recommendations or vary some of the recommendations.

Again, I think I should be clear though, as I know the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. These decision documents are not signed at the ministerial level. They are delegated to officials and they are the ones that review the YESAB recommendations and make the determination with respect to the decision documents that are issued.

I know the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't like to hear that. She wants to remove the ability for decision bodies to be able to reject or vary recommendations of the YESA board. She has been quite clear on the floor of this House. Again, I would remind the members opposite that First Nations are often decision bodies in these processes and they can choose to reject or vary those recommendations as well.

**Mr. Tredger:** Twenty-seven out of 35 of YESAB recommendations were removed or modified. The scope of YESAB's assessment encompasses all potential and environmental impacts, including impacts on water. In Alexco's most recent application for the Flame and Moth project, YESAB made 15 recommendations to monitor and mitigate the project's potential impact on water.

Of YESAB's 15 recommendations to do with water, this government changed seven and removed seven more, accepting only one. This government justifies these actions by saying that they are the responsibility of the Water Board, of the Yukon government, but YESAB has a mandate and a responsibility to make recommendations to mitigate effects on water.

Does this government really think that water-related recommendations should no longer be the mandate of the YESAA assessment —

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

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Again we hear the members of the NDP criticizing the ability of decision bodies to reject or vary recommendations in their decision documents. Again, in the member's own riding, the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation recently rejected a YESAB recommendation with respect to a placer claim. Again the NDP would have that ability removed. That's something that they're advocating for, and I'm sure First Nations will be very interested to hear that as one of their potential recommendations for changes to the YESAA.

Again, when these recommendations come forward from YESAB, decision bodies — including the Government of Yukon — have the opportunity to accept, reject or vary those

decisions. In this case, there were a number that were varied, but we feel the project can go forward.

Of course, there is another process that the company will have to go through, and that is the water licensing process. The member opposite conveniently left that out. The role of the Yukon Water Board is extremely important in the overall environmental assessment, as well as the regulatory process here in the territory.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

#### Motion No. 782

**Clerk:** Motion No. 782, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 7(1) of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Andrew Nieman as the acting Child and Youth Advocate, effective December 16, 2014.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I will not spend a great deal of time in speaking to this motion, as I believe all members of the Assembly are familiar with it, but I will just briefly explain its subject matter for Yukoners who may be listening to this.

The Child and Youth Advocate position is one of the House officer position-type category — whatever the proper technical term is. That is, the appointment of the Child and Youth Advocate is done by the Members' Services Board of the Legislative Assembly making a recommendation to the Commissioner in Executive Council. This motion is pursuant to the decision made by Members' Services Board that is currently going to competition on the Child and Youth Advocate position, with the current Child and Youth Advocate also given the opportunity to reapply. That is comparable to what has been done with other House positions recently. To allow that process to conclude, this motion then takes the necessary action to fulfil the decision made by Members' Services Board, which, for those who are listening and not familiar with it, is an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly.

That concludes my remarks.

**Speaker:** Does any other member wish to be heard?  
*Motion No. 782 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 in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**Some 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. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

#### Department of Community Services

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would like to begin by thanking officials here with me today for their support.

It's a pleasure to be here in the House this afternoon to provide information in introducing the Department of Community Services supplementary budget for 2014-15. The supplementary estimates before us consist of a \$1,738,000 increase in operation and maintenance expenses and an increase of \$703,000 from capital expenses. The department's combined O&M and capital budget for 2014-15, including the supplementary estimate, is \$130,303,000. This represents a significant investment in programs and services that directly benefit Yukon people and communities by developing and improving community infrastructure, assisting with and responding to emergency events; fostering strong local governance; the promotion and development of recreation and sport; and administering a broad range of licensing, business and regulatory services for the health, safety and protection of the public.

The Department of Community Services continues to work to achieve goals set out in our strategic plan and this enables the Yukon government to deliver on our commitments to achieve a better quality of life for Yukoners, promote a healthy environment, grow the economy and practise good governance.

Again, I would like to thank all of the staff of Community Services for their assistance and for the good work they do

every day to provide important services to Yukon and Yukon citizens.

Madam Chair, the Department of Community Services is committed to promoting vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities and this supplementary budget contributes to this vision. Our supplementary budget this year sees a significant amount of capital investment in community infrastructure for Yukon communities. These investments are strongly supported by two federal funding mechanisms: the Building Canada fund and the gas tax fund.

The Canada-Yukon gas tax agreement continues to contribute to healthy Yukon communities by supporting long-term planning and sustainable infrastructure. To date, over \$73 million in funding has been approved for 185 gas tax projects for municipalities and First Nation initiatives. A new gas tax administrative agreement was signed on July 24, 2014, which will provide \$163 million in funding from 2014 to 2024 for public infrastructure projects in Yukon communities.

We are also pleased that eligible categories have been expanded and remaining money from the previous fund will be rolled into the new agreement. Since 2007, federal, territorial and municipal governments have contributed over \$265 million to core infrastructure needs in Yukon under the Building Canada fund. \$182.9 million of that funding came directly from the Building Canada fund with Yukon government committing an additional \$57.6 million and other partners contributing \$24.9 million.

Funding under the Building Canada fund is flexible and supports priorities for Yukon's infrastructure needs. Over \$160 million of the investments under Building Canada have been directed to local priorities, which support local governance and have a direct and positive impact on the daily lives of Yukoners. The original Building Canada fund is ending in 2016 and the New Building Canada Fund has been made public by the federal government.

Details on funding for Yukon infrastructure will be announced soon.

As with the previous Building Canada fund, we expect the new fund will provide us with funding and capacity for important infrastructure development in the Yukon over the next 10 years, which is the life of this new agreement. In total, 46 Building Canada projects have been completed, and another 28 projects are currently underway.

In this budget, we see the Building Canada fund contribute heavily to three main areas. First, the Ross River suspension bridge — \$1.5 million has been estimated in this supplementary budget to repair and stabilize the bridge, with 75 percent of that recoverable from Canada. We recognize the importance of the bridge to the community and its citizens and are pleased to be moving forward with stabilization of the bridge.

Second, there are a number of road improvements and upgrade projects. This includes: \$1.3 million for new chipseal in Burwash Landing; \$31,000 for upgrades and resurfacing in Carmacks; \$38,000 for road upgrades in Pelly Crossing; \$1.823 million for road and drainage upgrades in the community of Teslin; and a \$207,000 increase for the Robert

Campbell bridge- widening project here in Whitehorse. Both of the projects in Pelly and Teslin are moving faster than expected and are currently expected to be completed earlier than originally estimated.

Third, this budget contains significant investments from the Building Canada fund in water and waste-water infrastructure and services. This includes work with local First Nation governments and municipalities to continue to ensure access to safe drinking water and waste-water management for all Yukoners. This includes: \$93,000 for a fill-point in Tagish's Taku subdivision, a project that is expected to be finished earlier than anticipated; \$220,000 for upgrades to the Ibex Valley fire hall water system; and a number of other large Building Canada fund water and waste-water projects that continue to progress, and work is ongoing in those areas. They are represented in this budget; however, continued construction on some of those has now been deferred to the next construction season. That includes: the deferral of \$750,000 in waste-water system upgrades for Teslin; \$462,000 for the Deep Creek water treatment plant and \$1.4 million for Mendenhall's community water supply.

As well, there are a few Building Canada fund projects that are being realigned after more work was completed in 2013-14 than was originally anticipated. This includes a decrease of \$275,000 for the water reservoir and pump system in Haines Junction and \$229,000 for Marwell sewer and water upgrades in Whitehorse.

As you can see, we are fulfilling our commitment to provide Yukoners with access to clean drinking water that meets or exceeds current Canadian drinking water guidelines. This will continue to be a priority for this government as we continue working with our partners to build water infrastructure for now and future generations of Yukoners. I should note, to that end, although the work on that will be contained in next year's budget, the commitment of \$5 million to the Town of Watson Lake for upgrades to their water supply was made possible in part through the good work of the Member for Watson Lake in bringing this priority to our attention.

In the area of Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs, another way that we continue to ensure access to safe drinking water is through the rural well program offered through the Property Assessment and Taxation branch.

This program provides low-interest loans to help rural residents install or upgrade domestic wells and water systems. The budget shows an estimated \$100,000 increase for this program due to historically high demand. As you know, we have also this year engaged with municipalities and consulted with them about the possibility of expanding this program so it can be offered to residents living within municipal boundaries who do not have access to water services there. As a result of that consultation, earlier this sitting I tabled in this Legislative Assembly a unanimously passed Bill No. 80, which provided for the expansion of the rural well program into municipalities through the creation of the new municipal domestic water well program. I would like to again thank all of the staff for their good work in bringing forward that

legislation and for doing the work that was necessary to move that project forward so quickly. That legislation does, I should note — as I noted earlier in speaking to that bill itself — give the control to the municipalities. They choose whether or not to sign on to the program, but it does allow that program to be offered within all participating municipalities.

The Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs division offers a very diverse range of services and it will also see an estimated increase of \$1,183,000 in operation and maintenance dollars included in this budget. That includes \$78,000 for public education to communicate the coming implementation of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. There is also \$1,105,000 to assist the Klondike Visitors Association to replace the aging slot machines and supporting equipment at Diamond Tooth Gerties casino in Dawson City. That amount was announced earlier this year and I believe work on that has been completed or largely completed at this point. I should note as well that the slot machine revenue received from Diamond Tooth Gerties is an important source of funding for the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, which goes to support programs and services for victims and crime prevention projects. On an annual basis, the amount of revenue received by the Yukon government and then transferred to that crime prevention and victim services trust fund from the slot machine revenue is typically around a quarter of a million dollars annually, so again, ensuring that equipment is in good shape is not only an important part of ensuring that Diamond Tooth Gerties remains an iconic tourist attraction in Dawson City, but also is an important source of ongoing annual funding for the crime prevention and victim services trust fund.

I should also note before my introductory remarks have concluded, that on Friday as I believe you know, we received good news from the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC, that they've approved with conditions an interim service to make it easier to access emergency responders in the Yukon. The solution was proposed by the Yukon government as a temporary solution while we work to implement basic 911 service throughout the territory.

Citizens and visitors will be able to dial 911 in an emergency situation, anywhere in the territory, without having to remember the seven-digit telephone numbers that are currently used in those communities. By dialling 911, callers will be directed by an automated service to select either police, fire or emergency medical services from an interactive menu.

CRTC approved our proposal on the condition that all calls using this service are ultimately answered — i.e. calls to local police, fire and emergency medical services that are non-answered, must be automatically transferred to the local RCMP detachment or the 911 call centre in Yukon.

I am pleased that we have received this positive decision and the conditions in that decision do require some discussion with our partners, but we expect that they will be manageable and that this will allow the 911 interim solution to be implemented in rural Yukon communities.

I would also like to thank the Association of Yukon Communities and the Yukon municipalities that have worked with us in this area for their support and assistance in preparing this application, and thank the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs for their support as well as for their continued efforts to encourage the Yukon government and others to move forward with implementing 911 territory-wide to improve public safety.

Again, I want to acknowledge and thank them for that support and thank the president of the Association of Yukon Communities, Wayne Potoroka, and the Association of Yukon Fire Chief president, Jim Regimbal, specifically, for their efforts on this file.

Moving to the area of land development — the Department of Community Services also continues to work on bringing new residential lots to market, while keeping costs as low as possible. Over the last number of years, the Government of Yukon has worked with the City of Whitehorse to make land available and has made significant progress. Since 2009, Yukon has invested more than \$96 million in land development projects that have resulted in over 600 new lots and subdivisions in Whitehorse. \$5.4 million is budgeted for 2014-15, including \$2.8 million for wrap-up of phase 1 and phase 2 of Whistle Bend, as well as \$2 million for advancing the design and start the clearing for phases 3 through 7.

This budget also shows \$147,000 for a lot contribution in phase 2 of Whistle Bend to Habitat for Humanity. Lots were provided in phase 1 and phase 2 of Whistle Bend to construct two duplexes, which, when completed, will be owned and occupied by four deserving families.

I should also note that just a couple of weeks ago, we announced an additional \$300,000 contribution to Habitat for Humanity, using money from the northern housing trust, which will enable Habitat for Humanity to continue to do their good work in providing homes for Yukon families through the efforts of their dedicated volunteers and the contributions of their donors.

Providing an adequate supply and range of land options is priority for government and we believe that this is an important factor in overcoming challenges related to affordable housing in the City of Whitehorse — that, while it not the only part of the solution, step one is providing an adequate supply of lots that Yukoners can purchase over the counter.

In the area of Protective Services, another Yukon government priority is safer communities while ensuring key government programs and services and providing emergency services to Yukoners when they need them the most. The motto of Protective Services is “semper paratus” — always prepared — and we deliver on that motto by ensuring emergency management, life safety and first-response programs maintain their states of readiness to provide the necessary support to Yukoners, Yukon organizations and Yukon communities in times of need.

Protective Services delivers its emergency response programs through Wildland Fire Management, Emergency

Medical Services, the Fire Marshal’s Office and Emergency Measures Organization.

As I mentioned earlier, to simplify public access to emergency help in communities outside the current 911 service area, we took action, and Protective Services was the lead branch in Community Services in working on the expansion of 911 to Yukon communities as well as the interim solution, which was approved by the CRTC with a modification.

In July 2014, we announced our intent to expand 911 services territory-wide within 16 to 24 months. In the interim, as I noted, we sought CRTC approval to launch an interim emergency response auto-select solution that will allow callers to dial 911 from land lines and cellphones in rural Yukon, and press 1, 2 or 3 to select the local emergency service that they need.

With the auto-select system, upon receiving the conditional approval of the CRTC, we do require discussion with our partners because of the one condition that was imposed, but we look forward to working with them and hope that this will allow us to move forward quickly to implement this new service territory-wide. This interim solution would also be phased out once basic 911 is brought into effect across the territory in its operation. The interim system has already been tested and it works, although there will be a requirement, as I noted, for a modification based on the specific condition from the CRTC.

With these interim measures, residents will also still be able to call the seven-digit emergency numbers that they currently use for contacting local emergency services.

This supplementary budget also sees some capital investments in Protective Services, including \$84,000 for a three-tonne truck and \$27,000 for construction of a modular, movable fire-staging camp for Wildland Fire Management. There is an estimated \$575,000 for flood and erosion control, including \$500,000 at the Mayo dike, \$55,000 at Zircon Lane, \$12,000 at the Liard River, and \$8,000 at the Porcupine River.

I believe you are signalling me that my current time has elapsed, so I will sit down, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Barr:** First off, I would like to welcome the officials to the House and thank them for their hard work. I know it is a huge department and there is a lot to keep track of. Thank you for being here and helping with answering questions.

I would like to start by commenting on more recent events from the City of Whitehorse. When it comes to our community services, the government has had a lot of mismanagement and broken promises. The territorial government relations with other levels of Yukon governance — especially municipalities, area councils and First Nations — seem to be at an all-time low. With the recent City of Whitehorse’s call for the minister’s resignation, it’s a cry for help at a time when the governments need to be working more together.

I would only hope that, from the recent meeting that was held between the city and the minister, there is a greater mutual understanding of the relationship and how both sides

of the fence are being listened to so that people can feel optimistic as we move forward. They are partnerships — and to be able to listen to each other's concerns and act on them accordingly.

I look forward to hearing movement in a good way over the next while — that that will be happening.

This year's supplementary estimates are a reflection. It seems that there are some misplaced priorities, and it speaks to the territory's waste-reduction goals. They've been left at the curbside. Projects are being deferred — that we've just heard in the opening remarks of the minister. I guess it questions as to why the lack of progress, and if it's the effect of the more recent remarks with the partnering efforts in the communities.

I do know that emergency services are another issue. We feel, on this side of the House, that there needs to be stronger political leadership. I guess it comes to my mind that, in discussions — and I do thank them for the briefing on Community Services; we were able to speak for quite some time — while we know the government is making cuts to ensure that community services are revenue-neutral, we believe that this kind of attitude goes against the entire premise of community services.

Some government departments make a profit and others, like Community Services, serve the public good and are designed to spend more than they take in. The government, we would hope, would pay more attention to this holistic approach to budgeting in regard to Community Services.

The Department of Community Services is a large and complex part of the government, as I've stated. It is the minister who has been under fire.

I am in no way saying anything toward the department staff here, but we just feel that, as it has been brought forward by others, the minister should be proactive and recognize these things as opportunities. I think that whenever there is conflict, it's always an opportunity to have a positive movement or opportunities for learning rather than take it as personal in any way or anything, but it just that it shows that there's concern. I'll just leave it at that.

I want to go on to Emergency Services. I know the government has been having a difficult time in Haines Junction with EMS and the ambulance volunteers — it's just another example — who took the step of possibly walking off on December 1. I am going to be asking some questions about what has transpired. I know that there were to be meetings with EMS in Haines Junction — and also to acknowledge that there has been a high turnover at the administrative level in Emergency Services.

Having — from only my short last three years — seeing these things and how it affects out into the community, it creates discontent, I guess.

My first question — and I'll just start here. I'm very happy, as I'm sure many people are — and I heard the minister speak about the fire chief, Jim Regimbal, who has been working so diligently for the 911 service to start. We also have been echoing those concerns on this side of the

House. We would like to know when people in the Yukon can dial 911. When will that take effect?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** First of all, I have to inform the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that what he knows is not so.

While I could list several examples in his introductory remarks, I would like to begin by centering on one, particularly, which is that he said that he knows the government is making cuts to Emergency Services. Madam Chair, that is absolutely incorrect. I'm not sure where the member dreamed up this assertion from but, in fact, to both Emergency Medical Services — which is the ambulance area of Protective Services — and to the Fire Marshal's Office, this government has significantly increased the annual budget for both of those areas. That is in both operation and maintenance and capital. This year, we made an increase to Emergency Medical Services and increased the operation and maintenance budget by — I believe it was roughly 12 or 13 percent, although we were checking the numbers on that because I don't have it right at my fingertips — but again, another significant increase to our funding for Yukon EMS.

For the member to say here in the House — and I'm assuming go out telling citizens in his communities — that government is cutting funding for Emergency Medical Services is, quite frankly, irresponsible.

The member has an obligation to know the facts, to not unnecessarily cause public fear, because Yukoners depend on Emergency Medical Services, and if the member is out there for political reasons or because of a lack of understanding — whichever the case may be — telling people that government is cutting funding for Emergency Medical Services when that is factually absolutely wrong, the member is going to unnecessarily cause Yukoners to fear for their safety and that of their families, and it is very irresponsible for that member to do that.

Again, contrary to what the member said, government has significantly increased the funding for Emergency Medical Services and significantly increased the funding for the Fire Marshal's Office, and this is in the areas of both operation and maintenance and in the area of capital.

Operation and maintenance in 2014-15 — the increase for EMS was \$1.2 million. Maybe the member is reading the wrong lines and is reading the increases as deductions. Maybe the member is just reading notes written for him by someone else, or maybe the member just simply doesn't understand this. I would strongly encourage him — anyone he has told that government is cutting funding for Emergency Medical Services — he should, for their sake of comfort, contact them, apologize to them for being wrong, and correct the record. Government has significantly increased funding — this year alone, \$1.2 million increase to Emergency Medical Services.

I would like to also take this opportunity to thank all of our staff in Yukon Emergency Medical Services for the good work that they do. I would like to thank all of our staff, whether they be in a management area or the paramedics — both the primary care paramedics, the advanced care paramedics and the critical care paramedics for the excellent

work that they do and the lives that they save of Yukon citizens.

I would like to as well thank our volunteer emergency responders in Yukon communities who are typically trained at an EMR level or an emergency medical responder level for the valuable services that they provide to their communities and to Yukon citizens, and I can assure you that I will continue to do my utmost to continue to support them in the good work that they do.

We have significantly increased over the past year what we are doing to address their training needs and their uniform kit. This is the result of when I met with the volunteer supervisors last October and sought their input on their priorities for supporting rural EMS within Yukon, and we acted on the priorities they identified.

In the area of Yukon EMS generally, I would also like to note that, through the good work of our staff there, we are continuing to proceed with our upgrades to equipment, including the purchase of two new ambulances that arrived this year and another two for the current fiscal year.

Again, through the good work of staff, they are determining the equipment that is necessary to meet Yukon's needs. They have also replaced and modernized some of the medical equipment, including monitors that are used for patients, and replaced them with a much lighter, more modern unit.

I have had the opportunity on a few occasions, including last week, to tour our ambulance stations in Whitehorse and to talk to the paramedics who provide those services and to thank them for the good work that they do, not only for the Yukon government, but their fellow citizens. I would like to take this opportunity again today to thank them and commend them for the lives that they save and the other areas where it might not be lifesaving, but it improves someone's health care outcomes. I thank them for providing that very, very important service to Yukon citizens.

In the area of the member's comments about municipal relations, I will not spend a lot of time talking about the City of Whitehorse situation beyond noting that Yukon citizens expect governments to work together. We are committed to doing exactly that. They also expect us to check current or past partisan differences at the door, to work together cooperatively and constructively and to put the public interest above partisan differences, and that is exactly what I and this government will continue to do.

I would like to again return to another of my remarks about Protective Services and the other areas that I was not able to cover in my introductory remarks. Wildland Fire Management is another one of the important branches within Protective Services. They and their staff protect Yukon communities and infrastructure at risk from wildland fires and other natural or human-caused disasters. They help prevent personal injury, loss of life and property damage by means of preparedness, early detection and rapid response. In addition to managing wildland fires, Wildland Fire Management is also responsible for managing the FireSmart program, delivering wildfire prevention and education and for supporting other

emergency and non-emergency response events, such as flooding.

In closing my remarks on Protective Services, I want to conclude by thanking all of the dedicated men and women who serve in all of the branches of Protective Services, whether that is as paid staff or as volunteers. That includes our paramedics and our volunteer emergency medical responders, both of whom work for Yukon Emergency Medical Services. I would like to thank all of our volunteer firefighters who provide services across Yukon communities. I would like to thank the fire marshal and his staff for the good work that they have done in increasing Yukon training through steps — including the new mobile fire unit, which is one of the first in Canada and has significantly increased our ability to create realistic environments to train volunteer firefighters as well as the municipal firefighters, for whom we provide access to the unit for their training purposes.

I would like to thank them as well for the good work that the Fire Marshal's Office has done in investing in identifying the priorities for replacing fire trucks with more modern equipment, which includes state-of-the art pumpers and pumper-tankers with which we have been able to equip a number of our unincorporated areas through the volunteer fire halls. We have been able to get them excellent equipment that is far more capable than what they had in previous years.

I am very proud of the good work that is being done in Emergency Medical Services and in the area of the Fire Marshal's Office and our volunteer fire department. I would like to thank all the staff and all the volunteers for the good work they do, and as well within the area of Wildland Fire Management and the area of Emergency Measures Organization — I thank again all the staff and thank all the volunteers for the valuable services they provide, not just to the Yukon government, but to their communities and their fellow citizens.

I should also note that other investments that have been made through the Fire Marshal's Office include the recently completed fire hall/ambulance station in Beaver Creek — in the Member for Kluane's riding — which I had the opportunity to visit and tour shortly before its completion with the Member for Kluane and the Premier, as well as staff. We're also, as you may know, in the process of replacing the Carcross fire hall. Upgrades have been made to other fire facilities, including the upgrades I mentioned to the water storage capacity at the Ibex Valley fire hall, which again responds to something heard from the local advisory council and from the volunteer fire department in that area.

Moving to the area of sport and recreation and libraries, contributing to a better quality of life for Yukon does not just stop at providing essential services, adequate residential lots and emergency preparedness and response. Active and engaging lifestyles are important to healthy and sustainable Yukon communities.

This work is supported by the department's Public Libraries and Sport and Recreation branches. In 2014-15, we've allocated \$110,000 to help with repairs and upgrades to existing recreational facilities in 12 unincorporated

communities. This includes the estimated investment of \$30,000 shown in this supplementary budget for the completion of the new Ross River recreation centre.

In addition to that, Sport and Recreation branch works with community partners to support recreation programming, facility operation and maintenance, seasonal pools and recreation staffing through the community recreation assistance grant and, this year, we have announced the increase of those grants from their previous level of \$417,929 per year for those unincorporated communities to an increase totalling some \$400,000, bringing the new total to \$817,929.

I should again acknowledge the work of the Member for Kluane in advocating for the increases to these grants, note that he brought this issue to my attention and thank him, as well as staff of Community Services, for their good work in identifying this need and the importance of increasing the community recreation assistance grants for these communities. Again, credit to the Member for Kluane for his good work in this area.

This increase is in response to community concerns regarding the rising costs of delivering recreation programs in rural Yukon, including costs of maintaining and operating recreation infrastructure and retaining staff and program leaders.

Our Sport and Recreation branch also supports Yukon's sport, recreation and active living organizations, as well as individual Yukon athletes and officials.

In 2014-15, \$2.1 million of the \$3.2 million operation and maintenance budget for sport and recreation is identified as direct funding to support Yukon's sport and recreation programs, including contributions to umbrella sport and recreation delivery partners, including Volunteer Yukon, Special Olympics Yukon, Sport Yukon, Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon, 29 Yukon sport-governing bodies and six Yukon special recreation organizations.

This supplementary budget shows an estimated increase of \$18,000 in operation and maintenance from Lotteries Yukon funding for sport initiatives. I would also like to thank the board of Lotteries Yukon for the good work that they do in contributing to sport and recreation groups throughout the territory and thank them for the good work they do in managing the Yukon Lottery Commission, which is an independent organization of government — though accountable to us through me, as minister responsible.

Throughout Yukon, there are also 15 community libraries, including the Whitehorse Public Library. These facilities are much more than access points for information. Libraries play an important social role in our communities and foster connections between people. Programs for all ages, public meeting rooms and Internet access are just some of the services offered by libraries. Our libraries provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment to relax, study, read or play. I know that, speaking personally, when I was growing up, I found the library played a very important part of my ability to get access to an increased range of books. It was one of the important services that helped fuel my appetite and

interest for reading at a young age and instill a lifelong love of reading.

Internet access at our libraries is also an important service offered by libraries that is important for people who do not have personal computer access, including youth, newcomers and visitors to our territory. Now our physical libraries are complemented with the new e-library. Since its launch in 2011, over 1,100 individual users have borrowed items from the collection more than 15,000 times. The e-library is also very successful, with some 2,000 e-books and audio books available for downloading. New titles in both English and en Français are added to the collection each year.

Adding e-books and other new technologies demonstrates the excellent efforts and innovation of our Public Library staff and has increased use of our libraries by providing new ways to engage with communities. Free 24/7 electronic access ensures Yukoners can find library services wherever and whenever they need them. Electronic resources also help us provide adequate service for specific needs in Yukon communities. For example, our bilingual library catalogue, with access to on-line databases and research resources, provides an important service for people with visual impairments. Alongside an expansion in electronic services, in-person visits to libraries have increased over the years. Yukon Public Library staff coordinates highly successful library programs like the annual Yukon Writers Festival, writers' roundtable, summer reading program, preschool story time and much more.

This supplementary budget also shows an increase of \$358,000 through a transfer to our own Department of Education for the Beaver Creek library. The community library is in the process of relocation and options for a new site are presently under review. Our commitment to library services ensures community libraries continue to enrich culture, provide opportunities for all people regardless of income or circumstance, and connect Yukoners to each other and the broader world. Yukon Public Libraries are transforming and thriving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Madam Chair, I believe you're indicating to me again that I'm running out of my currently allotted time, so I will sit down.

**Mr. Barr:** I would just ask the question that I had asked: When will the 911 start that has just been announced, with the approval from CRTC?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** As I thought I noted to the member in speaking to 911, I know I mentioned to — perhaps I'm just recollecting explaining it to the media earlier today. If I didn't note to the member opposite, I will again note that the specific condition in CRTC's approval that modified what our application was — it does require discussion with our partner — that being that our application for the interim solution for 911 proposed is having 911 in Yukon communities in the interim work through someone dialing 911 and having 1, 2 or 3 connect them to the appropriate existing service — and connect directly to whatever they currently reach when they dial in the seven-digit number for that service.

What we asked for was simply, for lack of a better term, the ability to, when someone dialed 911, if they didn't know the seven-digit number, they would get the option of pressing 1, 2 or 3 to reach police, fire or Emergency Medical Services, and it would then transfer them to the current seven-digit number. Not all of those seven-digit numbers always reach a person; some reach, I believe, a paging system. So the CRTC came back to us on Friday with a decision.

The CRTC approved this on December 5 with conditions for an interim service that will make it easier to access emergency responders in the Yukon. This service was proposed by the Yukon government as a temporary solution while it works to implement 911 services throughout the territory.

Citizens and visitors will be able to dial 911 in an emergency situation anywhere in the territory without having to remember the seven-digit telephone numbers that some emergency responders currently use. I should note of course, as members may or may not be aware, that though typically the prefix for the community is followed by the last four numbers, which are the same in most communities, there are a few that are exceptions to that normal rule and also I think it's fair to say that many Yukoners even don't necessarily remember what the prefix is for communities that they don't regularly visit or call people in an in an emergency situation. There is also the possibility that someone can forget something they would normally remember because not everyone reacts well or calmly to an emergency.

Again, we felt that this was an interim step, so we did the work that is necessary to ensure that we have the technical work done to provide 911 service territory-wide, as well as addressing the specific concerns and questions of municipalities. In doing that, after working with the Association of Yukon Communities, individual municipalities and the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs, we submitted an application in July of this year indicating our commitment to move toward basic 911 service, and indicating our estimated timeline for providing that territory-wide of 16 to 24 months, and then, at our request, to operate this in the interim. This is the first time the CRTC has approved this type of service and we appreciate their acknowledgement and understanding of our situation.

Again, citizens and visitors will be able to dial 911, once this is in operation, in an emergency situation anywhere in the territory without having to remember or know the seven-digit telephone numbers used in those communities. By dialing 911, callers will be directed by an automated service to select police, fire or Emergency Medical Services from that interactive menu. However, the modification made by the CRTC — the specific condition imposed — was that the CRTC approved this proposal on the condition that all calls using this service are ultimately answered — i.e. calls to local police, fire and Emergency Medical Services — that are not answered must automatically be transferred to the local RCMP detachment or the 911 call centre in Whitehorse.

As I've indicated earlier, we believe that that condition is a manageable one, based on our assessment, but since the

decision itself came down Friday and this is Monday, we need the opportunity for staff to talk to partner agencies to ensure that they have the same view of it that we do, to talk to them about the logistics of making that happen and to figure out exactly what needs to be done to implement that, so I am not in a position today to say exactly when that will happen.

What I can tell the member is that Yukon government is committed to doing this as quickly as possible. After we have conferred with the RCMP and municipalities regarding this — and Northwestel, as well — then we will be in a position to note the timelines for implementing that. As soon as we are in a position to announce a date or dates for implementation — we look forward to doing so because this is something that is a high priority for me, as minister, for the department and for the Yukon government.

Another condition that was mentioned in the CRTC's approval is one that was a condition of the approval — but in fact we were planning to do anyway — and that is that government conduct a comprehensive public awareness campaign to explain how the service functions as well as its availability, characteristics and limitations. While it is a specific condition of the CRTC decision, we do not really consider that a modification because it was something that we were planning on doing anyway, if given approval to operate the system.

The reason for this — just to explain it for those who may not be familiar — is that the CRTC is a federal regulator, and telecommunications companies are bound by their decisions and are required to seek their approval on matters within the CRTC's jurisdiction.

Returning to my introductory remarks, the Department of Community Services values collaboration, respect, integrity and service excellence. I am proud to be minister responsible for Community Services, and I am proud of the work that the staff do as we strive together to bring long-term benefits to Yukon communities.

We recognize the importance of strong relationships between governments, with Yukoners and our other important community partners and clients. We continue to invest in Yukoners and Yukon communities, and this supplementary budget reinforces our commitments through the many projects that we have underway. Thanks to the hard work of our employees and our volunteers, the Department of Community Services successfully delivers a very broad range of programs and services to Yukoners and Yukon communities.

Put simply, we are working together with Yukoners to create vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities through planned investment and community focused service delivery. That is what Yukoners expect and that is what we will continue to deliver. As I noted in my other remarks, areas of responsibility include everything from regulations on legislation to investing in and supporting the development of Yukon's infrastructure, as well as providing emergency services in times of need to Yukoners.

In closing my introductory remarks, I would like to thank and commend all of the staff of Community Services, as well as the volunteers who work with us, for the excellent work



that they do and everything that they do for this territory and their communities and all of the citizens of the Yukon.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response and look forward to the announcement of when people can actually dial the interim 911.

The Yukon is the only jurisdiction in Canada without legislation governing EMS. Without an act, it's almost impossible to audit the program since goals and standards are a moving target. Does the government have a plan to introduce EMS legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I am actually somewhat baffled at why the member thinks that legislation is the only way to assess the success of a program. I know we hear that the NDP has asked for a long list of legislation. I know, as of about a year ago, they had asked for over 40 pieces of legislation that they saw as the solution to everything from large challenges to minor challenges. I'm somewhat surprised that we haven't heard from them a request for legislation governing carpeting, considering the long list of things they've asked for. I know that, about a year ago, it was over 40 pieces of legislation. I think we stopped keeping track of it, but the number has grown since then.

Quite frankly, I disagree with the member that legislation is the only way to audit the success of a program. We gauge the success by a number of things that we can measure, including the fact — I'll give the member some examples of success in the area of Emergency Medical Services. EMS Whitehorse ground operation responded to 3,708 calls year to date. Pardon me, this is as of when this briefing note was prepared. I don't actually have the date on it, but that would be earlier this fall. In calendar year 2013, there were a total of 5,336 ground responses done by Yukon EMS, just through Whitehorse ground operations.

The Yukon EMS medevac program, as of when this briefing note was prepared earlier in this sitting, had responded to 601 air calls and, in calendar year 2013, reported a total of 860 medevac responses. We can also track how these numbers have grown since previous years. One of the things that has gone on is that we have seen an increase in the amount of responses required, which is one of the reasons for the cost growth and our continued increased investments, including the additional \$1.2 million that I mentioned to the member earlier as the budgetary increase in this fiscal year.

Yukon EMS supports 17 ambulance stations, 15 of which are located in rural communities and are operated by roughly 175 volunteers. The number of volunteers is somewhat fluid, depending on who moves in and out of a community or provides support.

Other examples of things that we can track — contrary to the member's belief that only legislation can allow you to audit the success of a program — in the area of Yukon Emergency Medical Services, we deployed two new ambulances this year as part of Yukon EMS's operational plan to replace units on a multi-year distance-travelled basis and purchase modern equipment that is designed by our capable and competent staff to meet the specific needs of Yukoners.

We ordered and distributed a new uniform kit to volunteer members in need of them and have ensured, through the budgetary increase, that there is an increased focus on this area and we will continue to ensure access to uniforms for all of our rural volunteers.

We completed a review and audit of the EMS community volunteer honoraria and, in conjunction with Volunteer Ambulance Society, strengthened standard operating procedures to streamline the honoraria process. EMS has also supported the Fire Marshal's Office in the delivery of educational modules to several Yukon fire departments.

Visits to communities by EMS community supervisors have been conducted, including inspections and base-compliance scoring. Driver training was developed for EMS staff, and delivery of the program began in September of this year.

We have seen cardiac monitors upgraded to allow for an increase in field diagnostic ability, and that was one of the areas where — as I mentioned to the member earlier when speaking of investing in new equipment — when I went recently to ambulance station no. 1, which is the Whitehorse station at the hospital campus, staff showed me a number of things, including the new equipment that our paramedics have. The new monitors are much lighter and are a significantly more modern version than they had previously.

Through this investment in upgrading their equipment to the most modern that is there, they have also taken the weight down — I believe it was to slightly less than 10 pounds per unit — from a level that had been, if memory serves — I believe they said it was about 29 pounds previously. By buying the most modern equipment, we have again equipped them to meet the needs of Yukoners and have significantly reduced the wait per patient that has to be packed around and lifted by our paramedics.

A third set of medevac gear has also been procured to allow for increased management of concurrent calls for service. A helicopter operation protocol has been developed for remote responses that include expanding the ability of Dawson City EMS responders in the Dempster Highway catchment area as well as in West Dawson and the goldfields.

We have seen also, this fall, increased training that had not been provided at any point in the past to rural volunteers coming into Whitehorse for the fall conference to help them gain training and comfort in operating around a helicopter to improve their ability to respond via helicopter from Yukon communities, if necessary and if, of course, the equipment is available in Yukon communities because not every Yukon community always has a helicopter in place.

But this is part of what we're doing in direct response to what we have heard from supervisors and EMS members as their priorities, their interests, and is part of what we're doing to support them in helping them receive the training and equipment that they need and want. We then provide them with the comfort that we will provide them the training. We will provide them the equipment and we will support them in the good work that they're doing, including making judgements of the appropriate action for the situation at hand

and having faith in them to do what we and all Yukoners depend on them to do, which is provide emergency care to people in time of need that can save lives and does.

Additionally, in this year, we've seen electronic reporting of community-based operations has been put into place to allow for the timely monitoring of major community events. A review is completed of all clinical guidelines using an evidence-based process. An on-line educational program has also been developed and distributed to major clinical clients and staff to facilitate their review and comments. I had the opportunity to have some of our paramedic staff give me a brief demonstration of the system, explained how it works and explained how it has been tailored to allow us to set in an place an on-line based educational program that improves our ability to make it available to all of our staff, as well as to volunteers, and provide increased access to training for those who want it, making it much more accessible to them. For some, training allows them to achieve additional skills without having to travel to Whitehorse or elsewhere to seek that education.

I was very impressed with what had been developed and I would like to thank the staff who have worked on that for their good work. It will be a system that is tailored to meet Yukon's needs, but very much builds on best practices from other EMS services. I would like to again commend and thank our staff for the good work that they've done in developing that on-line education system.

An EMS Facebook site and a series of recruiting posters were also designed and published this spring to address practitioner engagement and recruitment issues. EMS hosted an inaugural meeting of the International Rural and Remote Prehospital Care Collaborative in July, which facilitated 16 presentations by lecturers representing four different countries and four consensus sessions. Forty registrants attended this three-day meeting. This meeting allowed Yukon EMS to harvest materials and best practices from other EMS operations at very little cost.

Again, I have to take great issue and absolutely disagree with the member's assertion that only legislation would allow us to monitor the success of this program. In fact, these examples I gave, as well as many others, are concrete, tangible ways that we can assess the good work that is being done by EMS.

In fact, every Yukoner who themselves or a family member or friend had either paramedics or volunteer EMS responders come to help them in a time of need — those people know how well the program is working. They see the tangible evidence of that and all-too-many Yukoners have had the situation where, without Yukon EMS, they or a loved one would not be alive today. Again, I thank them for the good work that they do and very much appreciate the fact that they respond during times of need.

As one of the paramedics said to me recently — paramedics often say that they respond to people during the worst five minutes of their life. They have to show up when a person is in the worst five minutes of their life and arrive at their home, move their furniture, do what they can to respond

to whatever the health emergency is, and that is what we depend on them to do and that is what they do very well.

I should also note specifically Haines Junction, that is a community where we have had increasing challenges in maintaining volunteer coverage. Additional steps were taken for this summer, which were not as effective as we had hoped, to help increase volunteer coverage. We then responded to that and through talking to people, including the village council of Haines Junction as well as the supervisor of the volunteer EMS crew — we arranged to have additional discussions this fall and staff just recently attended a series of meetings. I believe it was over two days that we set up to hear directly from volunteers, as well as from others within the community, as to their suggestions for what additional steps we should take.

We are currently working with them in that area. I should note that also the MLA for Kluane has certainly been very proactive in bringing this issue forward. What the government will do is allow our staff to do their good work in working with the community to determine what additional actions we can take, based on both the options that they have come up with and what they hear from community members and the local EMS volunteers.

Again, good work is being done in that area in responding to that specific community challenge. I would like to again thank all of our staff in Yukon EMS and the volunteers for the very important services they provide and for all that they do and all that they sacrifice personally in their lives in terms of time away from families and time responding to emergency situations. Both personally and on behalf of the government, I want to thank all of them for the excellent work that they do.

I will again close by disagreeing emphatically with the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that legislation is the only way to assess the success of the program. In fact, we can assess through the examples that I listed and many others — the fact that lives are saved and health outcomes are better as a result of what Yukon EMS paramedics do and what our volunteers do.

**Mr. Barr:** I hear the minister's response and I must say that I do disagree with his stance in his reply. I also would like to thank all of the volunteers of EMS — the volunteer fire departments — and all those who respond who are out there in the communities when we're sleeping safe in our beds, looking after our families in times of emergency through all hours of the night. We don't even know what's going on.

I do know that living in a rural community, I have many friends who respond in this way, whether it's on the volunteer fire departments or the ambulance service or search and rescue — and some of them on all of these initiatives. Our volunteer departments — they volunteer on all of them and they're out a lot. One person comes to my mind, Bruce Harder, and the award that was given to him every year — a very good friend of mine who is no longer with us — how hard he worked and how hard so many do work.

These questions come from those volunteers themselves, not just with — the NDP is not making this stuff up for our own benefit. I know that the minister seems to think that all is

well out there in the EMS world and the volunteer world; however, we do beg to differ on this side of the House. It just comes to my mind and I'm glad there is money within this budget going forward for these services. It wasn't that long ago when we had EMS workers in our office saying, "What are we going to do? We're not getting any money for turning out our new outfits. Even our t-shirts — we're going to use our barbecue money because we're not even getting that."

They didn't make that up. The EMS workers in Haines Junction — it certainly wasn't their first move to hang up their radios on December 1. They had made several attempts to try to come to some agreement. I'm sure if they felt they were so supported as the minister says his leadership is doing, they wouldn't be attempting to take these stances. I am glad that there is some talking going on. I know that as of December 4, which was past the December 1 date — I see the member opposite there smiling. Boy, if I was — I'm not doing that work, but I do hope that the people who are in need of these volunteers see things resolved in Haines Junction, for example, so that there will be no radios hanging up or that it should even come to that for people who are out there volunteering.

I will just move on to — well, here's another question I guess. Has the recently departed Mike McKeage, who was a part of the talks in Haines Junction EMS — I know he was the head of EMS. Has his position been replaced, and what steps is the government taking to reduce the high turnover in the EMS leadership?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I think that it is interesting and it is really unfortunate — the angle that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes is coming at this, and the fact that he doesn't seem to appreciate the good work that is being done by staff in this area. We have, as I acknowledged, had challenges, specifically in the Haines Junction area. We did, through staff, take additional steps for the 2014 summer season to try to improve volunteer coverage in Haines Junction, but those measures were not as successful as we had hoped, and therefore we then, this fall, engaged again with the community and with the Haines Junction EMS crew, through the supervisor, to talk about what else should be done.

Challenges in maintaining coverage through volunteer emergency first responders is not something that is unique to the Yukon and it is not something that Haines Junction is the first community to experience. There have been times when — in part because those services depend on what people are doing in their lives and their ability and willingness to commit time to provide that service — it does change, depending on who is there.

In the case of Haines Junction, in fact, their total number of EMS volunteers is actually higher than some other communities that don't have the same challenges with coverage. They do have some specific challenges that we are working with them on. I would remind the member that it was this government that responded to the increased pressures placed on rural EMS volunteers by providing them with some compensation for the time that they take out of their lives to be on call and providing them with the standby pay. We have

also increased honoraria in the past, and we recognize that all of these measures are just one part of providing support and some acknowledgement to our volunteers for the good work that they do and for the time that they take to serve their communities.

Again, I should note that, for myself as Minister of Community Services, I met with all volunteer EMS supervisors in October 2013. My understanding from them is that, to their knowledge, it was the first time they had ever had a meeting with a minister. I followed that up again with a meeting in mid-year 2014 as well as another meeting this fall in October, at their annual conference. What I have said to EMS supervisors and reiterated there is that, while I have confidence in our staff and expect them to work with our staff on operational and logistical issues, I want to make sure they're aware that both the deputy minister and I, as well as all of my Cabinet colleagues and caucus colleagues, appreciate what they do and that they should know that, in addition to the fact that our operational staff and management staff are committed to working with them, senior staff and the minister are also very interested in what is going on and we're always open to hearing from them and want to ensure that they know that they have support, both from the operational management level and from senior levels within government.

To that end, at our meeting with supervisors in the fall of 2013, they identified three priorities that they wanted us to act on, and we did. In fact, at the meeting this fall with EMS supervisors, as the member or any other member will find out if they know and talk to rural EMS supervisors, they agreed that we did act to address the priorities that they asked for and as we said we would.

We recognize that, in every area, there's always more to be done and we need to continue to work with them to address new challenges that arise and continue to find ways to ensure that, together, we're always seeking to improve and always seeking to enhance what we're able to do for Yukon citizens.

With regard to the director position, I would note that with the departure of the director, we currently have an acting director in place and appreciate his abilities, his skills and his commitment to doing the job. The decisions about staffing and whether that acting designation will be replaced with a permanent director position are things that are handled at a senior management level — not by the minister, as the member should be well aware. I do have the utmost confidence in our senior staff and managers in Yukon EMS and appreciate the excellent work they're doing.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, some of what they're doing is quite innovative and compares very well with what is being done anywhere else in North America. They're learning from best practices, and we have excellent people who are doing an excellent job for Yukoners.

Talking about rural EMS support — other measures taken to support volunteers include the supply of uniforms and medical equipment. Community Services also provides training through rural Yukon, such as safe stretcher lifting, satellite phone operation, a series of new lights and siren professional driving courses, and EMR recertification.

While acknowledging that there was at one point an issue with people who had not received uniforms as quickly as they should in the volunteer areas, if a member is talking to anyone now who does not have a full uniform kit and is a Yukon EMS first responder, that person is either a new recruit or they can contact their supervisor to ensure that the supervisor orders the uniform kit, because we do have some in inventory right now and have the adequate resources to order more as need requires, and we are committed and staff are committed to working to ensure that, when we have new volunteers, we provide them with a full uniform in a timely manner. Again, if the member knows anyone who doesn't have that, they are either a new recruit or they should contact their supervisor who can contact the community operations support staff, who will ensure that that EMS first responder receives a uniform kit in a timely manner.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response.

In 2010, a full-time, paid volunteer system was implemented in Dawson City and Watson Lake. I know that Haines Junction had been considered at the time. Will the government consider a similar system under the principle of fairness for high-use EMS services, like in Haines Junction for the Haines Junction ambulance?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I hate to tell the member this, but this is another thing that he knows that he's quite simply wrong about. First of all, in Watson Lake and in Dawson City, while we do have full-time paramedics who cover the daytime period, in some cases for daytime calls they still require volunteers to assist them, and for the hours outside of — I can't recall if it's 8:00 to 5:00 or 9:00 to 5:00 that is their shift period. Still, Watson Lake and Dawson City do depend on volunteers to provide EMS coverage and, in fact, we receive excellent service and excellent coverage through the work of those dedicated volunteers. Some of them have been with Yukon EMS for only a short time, and some have been contributing many years out of their lives to provide this service to their fellow citizens. I very much appreciate what they do.

Also, the member stating that Haines Junction was considered for receiving full-time positions back in 2007 — well, the member is quite simply mistaken. That was not considered, and I can state that with certainty, having been involved myself at the time in ensuring that the new formula and, for the first time, standby pay were provided to EMS volunteers. The current director of Finance in Community Services was also involved in the finance end of that at the time. We both are quite absolutely certain that the member is absolutely and completely wrong about that. The member may wish to be a little more cautious about what he states as being factual here in the House.

The delivery model in Dawson City has 24/7, 365-days-a-year volunteer service, augmented by two full-time primary care paramedics whose hours — according to the information I have — are 8:30 to 4:30, Monday to Friday. The station's capability is a capability of response ranging from standard first aid to primary care paramedic, depending on volunteer training and availability. It has one primary ambulance and a

secondary ambulance. I hate to tell the member this, but he is again mistaken.

I would note that, when it comes to coverage, we have supported our volunteers and will continue to do so. The cost of adding on full-time positions adds a significant cost to the program. Of course, that also detracts from our ability to fund other things, including capital equipment, increased training for volunteers, and so on and so forth. In fact, while the member may see the solution as being full-time paramedic staff in Haines Junction, that is not what I have heard through municipal leaders, or through talking to the volunteer supervisor there. They are working with staff on considering other options.

At this point, we are not going to rule out considering anything to address the needs in Haines Junction, but I will leave it to our staff and leave it to volunteers who provide that service in Haines Junction to talk about the appropriate solutions for Haines Junction. Of course, in everything, we are going to continue to be focused on treating all communities fairly, but also responding appropriately to unique challenges and unique situations with solutions that respond appropriately to those needs in that community.

**Mr. Barr:** Understanding that Haines Junction is a unique situation and the minister is not ruling out any possibilities — whether they were considered or not, the fact remains that there are issues in Haines Junction.

Will the minister consider augmenting Haines Junction as Dawson City is augmented?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam Chair, I already answered that question. I told the member that we're working with the community and I explained to him what was being done in that area. Let me take this opportunity then to provide the member with some additional information about the good work that is done in Protective Services. Every year, Yukon can experience emergencies, including wildfires, floods, avalanches, extreme weather, human-induced and technological failures and other related events. By investing in personnel, equipment, training and infrastructure, the government has strengthened integration and coordination among the territory's emergency responses agencies to bolster their preventive and response capabilities.

Since 2008, all Yukon emergency management coordination and first response agencies have been integrated into the Protective Services division of the Department of Community Services. They include Yukon Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Measures Organization, the Fire Marshal's Office, and Wildland Fire Management. In spring 2013, Protective Services also became responsible for overseeing the territory's Building Safety and animal protection programs that report to the director of Fire and Life Safety, who is also the fire marshal.

Protective Services operation and maintenance budget for 2014-15 is \$28.7 million. Its capital budget is \$6.7 million. A key Yukon government priority is safer communities while sustaining key government programs and services. The motto of Protective Services is "semper paratus" — always prepared — and we deliver on that motto by ensuring emergency

management, life safety and first response programs maintain their states of readiness to provide necessary supports to Yukoners, Yukon organizations and Yukon communities in times of need. A few examples of this include — Protective Services delivers its emergency response programs as follows: Wildland Fire Management relies on a combination of highly experienced permanent and seasonal staff to deliver its mandate; Yukon Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Marshal's Office and Emergency Measures Organization rely on permanent staff as well as committed and skilled volunteer emergency responders to deliver emergency responses in those areas.

In addition to the roughly 175 EMS volunteers — I mentioned 15 Yukon communities — we have 225 active volunteer fire fighters overseen by 16 district fire chiefs in unincorporated Yukon. The work that they do provides that important service to thousands of Yukoners, including in the Whitehorse periphery. I would like to take this brief opportunity, as an MLA, to thank the Hootalinqua fire department and Ibex fire department for the important service that they provide and thank the Hootalinqua fire department for the excellent feast they put on over the weekend at their annual Christmas party and for the opportunity to attend it.

In addition, in the area of emergency measures organizations, we have approximately 130 ground search and rescue volunteers in seven Yukon communities and 50 Yukon Amateur Radio Association volunteers located primarily in Whitehorse.

Emergency response is a shared responsibility in the Yukon. While Protective Services provides volunteers with the training and equipment needed to respond safely and effectively, we rely on people's personal contributions to help us with recruiting volunteers, championing their programs and providing services throughout rural Yukon.

Yukon is committed to continuous improvement in the area of emergency management. In addition to supporting Yukon's emergency first-response organizations, Protective Services also coordinates resources in aid of scenario-based emergency management exercises.

In 2013, the Government of Yukon hosted the Canadian Armed Forces Operation Nanook 13, the first time this northern sovereignty and disaster management exercise was held in the territory. Exercises like Operation Nanook and other small-scale training initiatives help us and help our staff and volunteers and partner agencies practise preparations for natural- or human-caused disaster events and are key to Yukon's emergency preparedness model.

In an emergency event, Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization is responsible for drawing together the resources and the expertise required to respond in a timely and effective manner, whether from a local source, or across Canada, or, in fact in the United States. In 2014-15, the operation and maintenance budget for the EMO office — Emergency Measures Organization — was \$490,000, with a capital budget of \$403,000. EMO leads all emergency preparedness planning for the Yukon government, focusing on the four

pillars of emergency management: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

EMO is also responsible for ensuring that the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and for providing a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government's areas of responsibility. Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own emergency plans and progress is being made on the rest.

EMO has also been engaged in a multi-year initiative through Aboriginal Relations branch in Executive Council Office — the implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness planning by First Nation governments and communities. Emergency Measures Organization is also working with all of Yukon's self-governing First Nations to provide advice and mentoring in developing emergency preparedness plans and local capacity.

In the Yukon, the RCMP is responsible for finding missing persons, as well as for ground and inland water searches and rescue. EMO supports this by helping to provide training and equipment to search and rescue teams so that they can respond to a search request coming from the RCMP. As part of the government's all-hazards approach to emergency management, EMO works with Wildland Fire Management, Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Marshal's Office, Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Highways and Public Works, and other government and non-government partners to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

Periodically, flooding can also pose a risk to some communities. To help residents prepare for this, EMO publishes weekly seasonal flood-risk reports in partnership with the Department of Environment. These are distributed to the media, stakeholders and to the public by means of the website, Twitter and Facebook.

In 2013, Emergency Measures Organization coordinated the integrated interdepartmental and inter-agency response to the spring floods in both Rock Creek and Ross River. Both communities were significantly affected by separate ice jams and floods that occurred concurrently.

EMO is finalizing the work on a multi-year, \$350,000 project that it initiated to survey community flood-risk areas using light detection and ranging survey technology. Launched in 2012 in conjunction with the Yukon government's Climate Change Secretariat, this project is funded through the federal government's climate change adaptation program that is scheduled for completion this winter. Through detailed mapping of flood-prone areas in and near Yukon communities, planners, plan developers and emergency managers will all be able to better plan, build and prepare for future climate-change-driven flood risk.

In partnership with federal, provincial and territorial partners, EMO delivers its 72-hour emergency preparedness public education campaign each and every May.

In short, Yukoners are encouraged to learn about the risks they face, prepare an emergency plan and have an emergency kit capable of supporting themselves and their families for a

minimum of three days, keeping in mind that the power may be out as one of the events from an emergency, and it's important to have food that either does not need to be cooked or that you have alternate means of cooking, other than electricity form.

As part of its preparedness program, Yukon EMO recently led the successful Great Yukon ShakeOut exercise. On October 16, Yukon participants joined millions in North America and around the world to practise earthquake preparedness during the world's largest annual earthquake exercise.

EMO continues to work collaboratively with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to ensure there is a redundant radio communication system in place in case of a telecommunications emergency across the territory.

In addition, Yukon Amateur Radio Association, along with support from EMO and the Canadian Coast Guard, maintains the marine radio system that operates in the Southern Lakes.

EMO also participates in regional, national and international partnerships to share information and best practices related to emergency management, develop national emergency management strategies as well as guidelines and standards, and also to coordinate their implementation. To that end, EMO is active in the national Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management forum comprised of federal, provincial and territorial emergency management agencies. It is also involved in the provincial and territorially focused Canadian council of emergency measures organizations and is involved in the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement where it works with British Columbia, the State of Oregon, the State of Idaho, Washington State and the State of Alaska in making preparations to assist each other during catastrophic events.

Moving on, a few other areas that I can provide additional information to the member opposite on — in the winter of 2013, Yukon Emergency Medical Services and the Department of Health and Social Services entered into an agreement with the Edmonton International Airport to use the new Alberta health care medevac facilities to allow for quicker turnarounds of medevac aircraft in Edmonton — of course, aircraft coming from the Yukon and flying to Edmonton.

Yukon Emergency Medical Services now employs EZ-IO technology to increase the efficiency of intravenous access in pediatric cases and in patients with critically low blood pressure.

As I mentioned earlier, Yukon EMS hosted the first-ever international rural and remote pre-hospital care collaborative in 2013 to further the exchange of knowledge and best practices among various emergency medical response agencies that provide pre-hospital care to patients in rural remote settings, such as that found in Yukon. As a result of this work, a group of Australian paramedic students from La Trobe University in Victoria — pardon me if I am mispronouncing that, Madam Chair — visited the Yukon in

the summer of 2014 to learn from Yukon EMS staff and study the territory's pre-hospital and health care delivery system.

In November 2013, the new \$8.1-million emergency response centre in Whitehorse was officially opened. Built to post-disaster standards, it houses Whitehorse's primary ambulance stations and Yukon Emergency Medical Services corporate offices. The existing ambulance station next to the hospital continues to serve as Whitehorse's other ambulance station. Together these two facilities are improving response capability to residents in Whitehorse and the surrounding area and providing residents with faster emergency service. To strengthen the organization's interoperability capabilities, Yukon EMS staff are trained in the incident command system used by emergency responders in Protective Services and across North America.

As I mentioned, Yukon EMS is in the process of annually updating our 23-vehicle ambulance fleet with new equipment. Three recent arrivals to the fleet include an ambulance put into service in the 2011-12 fiscal year, and two more units in 2013-14, with another two units expected this fiscal year.

In February 2014, I helped, along with staff, to welcome the two new ambulances to the new emergency response centre in Whitehorse. As I mentioned, two new ambulances are being purchased in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Yukon EMS can be used to strengthen its internal administration as well as reporting education and staffing practices to improve the delivery of high-quality and efficient pre-hospital care to Yukoners across the territory. Again I have to disagree with the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and his view that legislation is the only way to track success. I believe that the things that we can track — the improved health care outcomes, the responses that are done by Yukon EMS and the lives that are saved — are the true measures of success in this area.

The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for reducing the loss of life and property to fire and other related emergencies throughout the Yukon. It does this through leadership, education, enforcement, program development and first response.

The Fire Marshal's Office 2014-15 operation and maintenance budget is \$1.75 million, and the capital budget is \$4.76 million. The Fire Marshal's Office budget includes \$993,000 for fire protection, including fleet fire truck replacements, volunteer fire department equipment and upgrades, including fleet repair, new turnout gear and equipment, fire-caused investigation equipment and more. This includes, in this current year, new fire trucks delivered to communities, including Tagish and Ibex Valley, and Golden Horn as well. Any investments that are made by the Fire Marshal's Office are doing a great job of modernizing our fleet and ensuring that our Yukon firefighters have access to modern equipment that helps them better respond to the needs of their communities.

The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for the entire Yukon fire service, including municipal and rural community fire departments, but municipal governments do manage their own departments with financial assistance from the Yukon

government through the upgraded comprehensive municipal grant put in place during my predecessor's time in Community Services, where we provided both a significant increase to the comprehensive municipal grant and an updated formula that better addresses the needs of Yukon municipalities.

Again, municipal governments manage their fire departments, but oversight for fire departments also comes under the Fire Marshal's Office.

Madam Chair, I believe you are signalling me again that my time is running short at this current allotment.

**Chair:** Before we go on to the next question, would members like a brief recess?

**Some 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 resuming general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to welcome everybody back — nice to see you all.

The City of Whitehorse provides \$75 a tonne for recycling diversion credits to a maximum amount of \$150,000 per year for all recyclers. Does the Yukon government have a maximum cap for their diversion credit top-up? If so, what's the amount? Does Community Services have anything to do with the beverage container regulation advisory committee or does this group only work with the Department of Environment? Also, what role, if any, does Community Services play in the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation consultation?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** First of all, no, there is not a cap on the Yukon government's diversion credits. Our diversion credit was paid on a per-tonne basis. Again, I will reiterate that the \$75 per tonne that we provide inside Whitehorse and the \$150 per tonne we provide outside of the municipality was exactly what we were asked for the by two recycling processors — Raven and P&M last year. We implemented that after they requested it and after meeting with staff. The simple answer is, no, there is not a cap on our diversion credit on the total annual amount we will pay out under there.

As far as beverage container regulation and designated material regulation, the group that the member is referring to is not one that is from Community Services; it is the Department of Environment. The Department of Environment has played a supporting role to the Department of Community Services in the development of the beverage container regulation changes and the designated material regulation changes. The Department of Environment is the lead but, of course, staff, as well as myself, were involved in working with the Minister of Environment and officials from Environment on what was contained in those proposed changes that just recently concluded their public consultation. Of course, if the proposal is implemented, the increased refunds for some of

the beverage containers and the increased deposit portion will assist Community Services with the work it does, both with municipalities and in our facilities in unincorporated Yukon.

As well, the changes to the designated material regulation — to apply it to a wide range of electrical and electronic products for the first time will both provide increased revenue to recyclers, recycling processors and community depots, and will also allow us see tipping fees at facilities that have them eliminated for those products. This is, in my own personal belief and something that I have heard from constituents and throughout the territory, something that people see as being a big part of the illegal dumping, which certainly did increase after the increases to Whitehorse's tipping fees.

So we are trying to ensure again that the consumer pays, but do so in a way that reduces the temptation for people to engage in the environmentally irresponsible behaviour of dumping electrical and electronic waste, rather than doing the responsible thing and dumping it off at an appropriate municipal or unincorporated facility to handle those products.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response.

Can the minister let us know where the funds that pay the diversion credits come from?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Yes I can. I assume the member would also like me to tell him the answer to that — pardon me, a moment of humour.

Yes, the funding for the diversion credits comes from the recycling fund. I should also note that there have been a few times where the recycling fund is a top-up of general revenue to ensure that it has a sufficient balance in it to meet the needs of the day.

**Mr. Barr:** Since the diversion credit top-up was only implemented in December of 2013, how much has been diverted — or paid out?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** We're looking for that information, but I don't think we have that specific information to answer the member's question at this point in time, but I would also take the opportunity to note that there is more waste on-site at recycling processing facilities that would be eligible for the diversion credit if it were shipped out of the territory. The exact amount that has been contributed at this point — I would be happy to undertake to look into that information for the member opposite, but I don't have the answer to that in front of me right now and nor do the officials with me.

**Mr. Barr:** I look forward to receiving that information when the minister can forward it on.

In light of the minister's assertion that officials of both departments met with recycling processors, I have a few follow-up questions. At a recent meeting with officials, both recyclers raised concerns around the proposed beverage container regulation changes. Will the government take them seriously? How long before the recyclers know that their concerns around BCR have been heard? Will members of the beverage container advisory committee see the final proposal before regulations are changed? What is the process and timeline for the changes? How were the changes set for the designated materials regulation? Both recyclers feel that the

amounts are low on some materials. Will you respond to their concerns?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** First of all, I should note that that is a question best addressed to the Minister of Environment since Environment is the lead department in these proposed changes. Environment is the department responsible for beverage container regulations and the designated material regulations.

With the member's question about specific concerns raised, what I can tell the member generally is, of course, the Department of Environment, the Department of Community Services and in the other involved department, will listen to and consider any specific concerns or input from the Yukon's two recycling processors, as well as consider input received from governments and from citizens and from other stakeholders.

Listening doesn't mean that we will necessarily do exactly what they requested, but those requests will be considered on their merits. They will be given appropriate consideration by officials and they will be treated seriously, but that doesn't mean that they will be listened to in the way that the member seems to be defining it, which is that the recycling processors ask and that means that government is going to do exactly what they asked for.

Again, just as with the increased request we heard from Raven Recycling for a diversion credit substantially larger than what they asked for last year, we do ask for a breakdown. Where it's asking for increased money from government, whether through fees by regulation or through diversion credit, when an NGO or private sector company is telling us the cost has increased — or are asking for an increase — government officials are going to do their due diligence. That includes requiring them to actually show us the evidence of those cost increases, explain why the costs have increased and for which categories of material those costs have increased, because the categories of material that are covered with the diversion credit have different values in the recycling market. Some of them are still valuable in lucrative streams to my understanding. The price received for those products versus the cost of shipping out — certainly there does seem to be some shift in that area, but again, we're going to require that we receive the necessary information from processors for any requests that they're asking.

I do have the information now for diversion credits, which is that we've paid \$145,000 to date through the increased diversion credits. Again, there is more that is eligible and we do not have a cap on our portion of the program. As I've stated several times in this House, we are working closely with the City of Whitehorse on finding long-term solutions for recycling and ensuring Yukoners have access to appropriate recycling capacity and services, but with any of the models proposed, including Raven's request for an increased diversion credit, we do want to fully understand the cost implications of the request. When we receive a request that was jointly requested by the two processors last year, which was a combined diversion credit of \$150 per tonne, and a year later one of them comes back and is asking for that to

be more than doubled to \$330 a tonne, I think most Yukoners would understand and agree with us when we ask them for information to demonstrate why costs have risen so significantly from the amount they told us was what they wanted a year previously.

In the area of solid-waste management, I would also like to provide a bit more information for the member, which includes that the Yukon government continues to invest in our communities and has made strides toward modernizing solid-waste management that will adapt to the changing needs of future generations of Yukon communities. This includes ending the open burning of solid waste at Yukon dumps, which did also cause operational challenges for the Yukon government and municipalities in adapting to the increased volumes and increased costs of handling waste, versus simply putting a match to it.

Building on the success of the "Our Towns, Our Future" review, Yukon government partnered with the Association of Yukon Communities to form the Solid Waste Working Group, which produced a findings report in 2013. Yukon government is currently in discussions with the Association of Yukon Communities to renew the mandate of the working group as we work together to modernize solid-waste systems in the territory. The work of this group follows the 2009 *Solid Waste Action Plan, Yukon*, and we are pleased to say that we have taken a number of steps to implement objectives from that work, including meeting the commitment to end the practice of open burning and transferring solid-waste facilities to run more modern systems.

Unincorporated facilities operated by Community Services provide opportunities for diversion of various forms of waste, including recyclable materials. Facilities closer to larger populations provide designated drop-off areas for a variety of waste streams and signage is provided to guide the public and help them separate various waste streams for proper disposal and to enable recycling of materials that can be recycled.

The list of materials that are currently being separated at several Yukon facilities near larger populations in incorporated areas for recycling include tires, scrap metal and white metal, propane tanks, e-waste, and common recyclables, such as papers, plastic, cardboard and tin. Other materials that are being separated at several sites for proper collection and disposal include waste oil, hazardous materials and clean wood waste.

This level of diversion leaves much smaller volumes of waste going into Yukon landfills. It also decreases environmental risks by diverting more environmentally hazardous materials. We will continue to build on this work and use a model of continuous improvement as we upgrade infrastructure and systems related to solid waste and recycling.

We are also committed to working with industry and other stakeholders, including community depots and NGOs, to find long-term solutions to improve waste diversion, recycling, reduction and handling as we move forward and, of course, with our municipal partners. We are committed to fair



and transparent procurement processes in establishing conduct of our operations.

We will continue to increase our engagement with industry to raise understanding of operational work taking place in communities and contracting opportunities that will be advertised. There are some inherent cost challenges to responsible waste management in the north, but we are committed to finding responsible and efficient solutions.

Since ceasing the burning of garbage at our solid-waste facilities, our operation and maintenance budget has doubled. These costs include environmental stewardship initiatives, like groundwater monitoring at Yukon facilities, which was not previously done.

These costs are still cheaper in the long term than opening and closing landfills, and it is also important to note some of the monitoring of wells included at landfill facilities that have been closed, where it is important for us to understand what previous practices and previous eras — what effect that waste disposal could potentially have and to ensure that, if there is any leachate or anything coming from those facilities, that we are aware of it and take appropriate steps to address it. I would note that this comes a long way from past eras in the Yukon, where, as most members probably know, the Marwell dump was at one point right at river's edge. I know that personally, when my family and I moved to Lake Laberge over 30 years ago, at that point in time, you could find 45-gallon drums all over the beaches of Lake Laberge, and glass bottles as well and shards of glass bottles and other assorted debris that had floated there, presumably mostly from dump sources.

We have come a long way in the territory from times that are within living memory of some people here. There is an increased cost to it, but it is also worth paying more to ensure that we are not engaging in the hazardous practices of past years. Additionally, ending the open burning of solid waste and the burning of materials that contain known carcinogens and other pollutants is an important step not only in reducing pollution, but improving the air quality of Yukon communities, where many of these dumps were located next to. Through the steps — including now through these changes to the designated material regulations — the Department of Environment will now include proposals including upfront disposal fees for electronic products, including iPads.

Madam Chair, we are committed to fostering a strong working relationship with municipalities and communicate them prior to any changes to solid-waste operations or regulatory standards. In 2013, as mentioned, we partnered with the City of Whitehorse to establish increased funding for recycling processors, including matching Whitehorse's diversion credit for non-refundable recyclables.

As I mentioned earlier, we are in ongoing discussions with the City of Whitehorse to develop a more sustainable long-term model for processing recyclable materials within the city and throughout the territory. This work has included studies focused on recycling, both from a financial and operational aspect — one study specific to the City of Whitehorse and another for southeast Yukon. We are currently reviewing outcomes of these and are committed to

partnering with all the municipalities to create a sustainable model for processing recyclable materials.

I should note that while the City of Whitehorse remains responsible for the work done and how they respond to the recommendations from the consultant that they contracted to help them take the next steps in the recycling model, we have assisted them through funding for part of the consultant's fees and are discussing with them their views of how they envision responding.

Of course, Whitehorse being, in fact, a larger player in the handling of waste materials and recycling than the Yukon government, we are very interested in what they see as the solutions and will be discussing those with them.

As I noted earlier, we are also working with the Department of Environment to hear Yukoners' feedback on proposed changes to the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation — pardon me, Madam Chair, I should update that. We worked with the Department of Environment on that and we'll work with them in considering the feedback heard through public and stakeholder consultations.

The proposed changes to the beverage container regulation would expand the range of containers subject to a deposit and increase the amount of money available to support the community depots and processors. Those proposed changes were created with the goal of increasing the amount of materials recycled in the territory.

Proposed changes to the designated material regulation would also include more tires of different sizes that would be subject to an environmental fee and would also, as I noted, cover increased electrical items and electronics, which are not currently covered. This is another large step toward increasing environmental stewardship through waste diversion. But in response to what the member may have heard from some in this area, we see this as something that is a next step in this area. More work will need to be done in the future, but we have to be cognizant, as we make changes to regulations, of the effect that it has on municipalities, the effect that it has on citizens and the effect that it has on people who are trying to pay for things that they need to buy for themselves and their families. The adage that comes to mind is "Rome wasn't built in a day". That may not be the perfect analogy, but it does require ongoing work in this area to modernize our system and to move it to a more cost-effective system with increased waste diversion.

I should also note that, in 2014, we signed an agreement with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow to take over the operation and maintenance of the Old Crow solid-waste facility, which they did in the summer of this year. This example stands as a new way of managing solid waste in the territory, fostering strong, sustainable local governance and recognizing the importance of local involvement and ownership with critical local infrastructure, as well as partnering with First Nation governments to help them address the needs of their citizens. We see the potential for this model expanding to other communities in the Yukon and are engaging in discussions with other First Nations regarding the

possibility of them also taking over local responsibility for managing our facilities in unincorporated communities with First Nation governments.

As with all of our facilities, we will continue to monitor and test groundwater in Old Crow to ensure the local watershed is not being negatively affected, as well as continue to work with regulators in Old Crow to ensure appropriate and efficient operation of the solid-waste gasification unit in accordance with the permitting requirements. Yukon government has been working very closely with the suppliers and engineers and are happy to see that fuel efficiency, emissions and cold weather performance of the gas fire in Old Crow have improved. We've also collaborated with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to coordinate the removal of waste metal from Old Crow in early 2014 on the winter road that was constructed. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for his work on that file and for his efforts in seeing the road put into Old Crow to respond to the needs of his community in cooperation with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

In the fall of 2014, site improvements were completed at our solid-waste facilities in Destruction Bay, Deep Creek and Champagne. We are also continuing discussions with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for future use of settlement land that the Canyon Creek transfer station is currently located upon.

Across the Yukon, we're seeing investment and improved management of solid waste by municipal governments, by First Nation governments, by the Yukon government and by private sector and non-profit organizations. We believe in innovative approaches to managing solid waste in remote communities and that community partnerships can be an important part of success for collective solid-waste management efforts. We also recognize that there are challenges, and we will continue to work to address rising costs associated with the transformation and modernization of waste management in Yukon. Currently, Ross River still has a landfill. We have initiated discussions with the Town of Faro to explore the possibility of a regional approach for managing waste from Faro and Ross River.

With respect to municipal governments, the Yukon government is committed to working with the Association of Yukon Communities and municipal governments to address long-standing concerns about potential landfill liability from past decades. We will continue to expand our efforts to address solid-waste management with a pan-territorial approach in partnership with municipalities. Under the *Public Health Act*, municipalities are required to operate solid-waste disposal facilities for their residents and municipalities follow the same operating requirements for unincorporated sites as established by the solid-waste management regulations adopted in January 2000.

**Mr. Barr:** Regarding the diversion credit money that did not come out of the recycling fund, what department did it come from, how much and which line item? Of the \$145,000, was that to both recyclers? If so, what's the breakdown by recycler?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I think the member must have written the question and not adjusted it after hearing my previous answer, or perhaps he missed what I had said earlier.

The money for the diversion credits is coming out of the recycling fund, so any money that — I think he was asking what would happen with money that we expected to expend. Any amount that isn't spent in a current fiscal year in the recycling fund stays in the recycling fund for future cost pressures.

As I mentioned before, we have had to, on more than one occasion, top up the recycling fund with money out of general revenue, but I should note, as well, that the proposed change to beverage container regulations and designated material regulations will provide increased funding for the operation of the recycling fund while noting that, within the first little while of operation under that fund, any products such as TVs, electronics and electrical products that do not currently have an upfront environmental fee — any of those products that somebody dumps off at a landfill in the first couple of years of the program — we won't have received revenue for that TV, so there will be a need to supplement it, either through existing amounts in the recycling fund or top it up with investments out of general revenue. Those needs will be assessed in the course of each fiscal year.

Again, with the diversion credit, the amount was roughly \$145,000. My understanding from officials is that it went to both recycling processors. I don't know the breakdown of that. We don't have that information with us, but both recycling processors are eligible for the exact same amount per tonne, and the amounts they ship out are dependent on their management decisions, as well as what they have received from what Yukoners drop off in recycling at their facilities.

Again, we don't have the exact breakdown on that, but I can say that they were both equally eligible to receive diversion credits. As I mentioned before, there was no cap on the amount of diversion credits that the Yukon government was prepared to pay — or is prepared to pay — going forward under our current matching \$75 contribution within Whitehorse and the \$154 amount for unincorporated Yukon. As far as considering any increases to the diversion credits, as I noted, that is one of the possible options that we are considering, but we are discussing all of that with the City of Whitehorse. Any increase in direct funding to any service provider, whether to a non-governmental organization or a private sector offering recycling services, we would want to understand what we were paying for. As I have said several times in this House and have said in meetings with the City of Whitehorse, any amounts that we are providing directly to recycling processors — we are committed to a fair and equitable arrangement, which includes paying the exact same amount to each one for the service they provide, based on what they are processing and what they are shipping out of the territory.

**Mr. Barr:** Could the minister get back to us with the breakdown per recycler please?

Was the top-up to the recycling fund required this fiscal year? If yes, how much?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would like to thank the officials with me as well as those who are — as a result of the changes we have made to the roles here in this House that allow the use of electronic equipment — back at their desks working at providing information. I actually do have the breakdown on the diversion credit now that I did not previously have. My understanding is that of the \$145,000 spent within the past year, that \$90,000 of that went to Raven Recycling and \$55,000 to P&M Recycling. As I noted, they both had the exact same eligibility for it. My understanding is also that we did not top up the recycling fund in the current fiscal year, but that is something that has been assessed based on demand and including — there has been in the past — equipment for recycling facilities and operating some of our transfer stations — or providing recycling equipment to them — that has come out of the recycling fund. At times there could be — potentially, going forward — an increase for our top-up to this fund, but that will be assessed on an ongoing basis based on what we find out going forward in terms of those demands.

A couple of other areas I would just like to note is that since 2011, \$7 million has been allocated toward solid-waste management capital projects under the Building Canada fund. That includes \$2 million identified for transfer stations and recycling depots. This investment enabled us to transform previous dump-and-burn facilities into transfer stations that meet our commitments that we have made, both at an elected level and in our platform and within the changes made to the environmental regulations and permits that end the open burning of solid waste. This funding has led to the installation of infrastructure that significantly reduces the amount of waste into Yukon landfills, and that includes over \$1 million for that initiative as well as — although I am not sure I have that — I do have that number here. We also established an agreement with the City of Whitehorse that provided \$800,000 to the city under Building Canada for improvements to the city's composting facility. So the good work that has been done by the city in composting was made possible through the support of \$800,000 from the Yukon government.

Discussions continue to municipal governments with respect to establishing regional agreements, and we are hopeful this dialogue will continue and be successful. In May 2013, my predecessor, as Minister of Community Services, signed an agreement with the City of Dawson to formalize a partnership to regionalize solid-waste services in the Dawson region. I know that they were very pleased to see that initiative and agreement concluded. That agreement provided the City of Dawson with access to \$400,000 of Building Canada funds for capital upgrades to the Quigley solid-waste facility and also provides assistance with the disposal of special waste streams and up to \$50,000 of operation and maintenance funding annually to the City of Dawson.

The 2013-14 budget included \$2 million for the solid-waste management system. As well, \$1.7 million was identified for recycling and sorting facilities, transfer stations, recycling depots and the compost and chipping agreement. In

the 2013-14 budget, \$1.8 million was used under the gas tax fund to undertake a number of upgrades at solid-waste facilities in unincorporated communities. Several projects were identified in the approved integrated community sustainability plan for unincorporated Yukon which was developed through a seven-week public consultation at all unincorporated Yukon communities.

Discussions and research helped identify priorities for infrastructure investment under the gas tax fund that will bring wide benefit to the territory. Priorities identified in the integrated community sustainability plan are aimed at supporting sustainable solid-waste management recycling, waste and water infrastructure, and active transportation. Yukon seeks to maximize the benefits of federal infrastructure funding programs to improve community-based infrastructure and initiatives that will contribute to a healthy environment.

Gas tax funding is held in trust for all Yukon municipalities and First Nation governments who each have a specific allocation of the overall fund. The gas tax fund has become a permanent source of revenue for Yukon communities. In July 2014, a new agreement was signed and will now provide an ongoing source of funding for local infrastructure priorities, including drinking water and waste-management systems, solid-waste management, community energy systems, public transit, local roads and capacity building. Yukon's initial five-year share of the fund was \$37.5 million and beyond 2010, amounted to \$15 million per year over and above existing infrastructure programs.

The new gas tax agreement is set to run from 2014-15 to 2023-24. Over the next five years, Yukon will receive \$78 million for infrastructure programs, including projects identified under new categories that include regional and local airports, broadband connectivity, brownfield redevelopment, sport infrastructure, recreational infrastructure, cultural infrastructure, tourism infrastructure and disaster mitigation.

Many municipal governments and First Nations have utilized portions of their gas tax allocations for solid-waste projects. In Whitehorse, \$2.8 million was approved for compost-program improvements, which led to composting and garbage collection carts for curbside pick-up for upgrades to the city's composting facilities, including organic approval status and trucks — \$60,000 was approved for a waste-composition study in 2009. It helped the City of Whitehorse analyze contents of the landfill to understand the nature of composition and better management of the waste stream.

\$275,000 went toward upgrades of the Whitehorse landfill, including transfer stations now in place. That occurred in 2013 and it was completed underbudget for \$78,201 and also in 2013-14, \$680,000 was provided to support Whitehorse compost facility infrastructure and \$630,000 was provided to support solid waste action plan implementation.

For the Village of Teslin, \$16,000 was approved to complete installation of solar-powered electrical fencing and building a compost facility structure and \$78,000 was used to create a transfer station at the Teslin landfill.

The Town of Watson Lake has accessed and spent \$16,527 to complete upgrading to its recycling centre and an additional \$150,000 was allocated to develop a waste-management plan that would help it meet regulatory obligations related to the landfill.

Madam Chair, I won't continue too much on the list because some of that is historical context on investments that have been made. I will sit down and look forward to further questions from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response.

I am going to ask a few questions — a few comments here. I'll go slowly, so officials can maybe hear them all.

Is Community Services working with the City of Whitehorse to combine diversion-credit payments to processors on a quarterly basis? Currently, the city pays once a year and processors have to fill out two separate forms for the same commodities — one for the city, who pays annually and another agreement with YG, who pays quarterly. YG has been asked to work with the city to reduce this red tape and pay the full amount quarterly.

YG could front the city's payment, thus assisting both processors with potential cash-flow issues. Will YG work with the city and the processors to reduce red tape and assist the processors with potential cash-flow issues? If YG has not diversion credit top up once the \$150,000 threshold is hit with the city that would mean that the processors would only be able to access \$75 a tonne. Is that right? Wouldn't that mean that the more the processors recycles of non-refundables, they have less money to do it? What is the incentive then to continue recycling of non-refundables.

Did Community Services have anything to do with the proposed charges for the new items such as microwaves listed in the designated material regulation consultation?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would just note that all of this, including and especially how the city handles its portion of this, is a matter that is being looked at. The city, as the member should be aware by now, is looking at their view of the long-term solutions and doing work on that. We have been working with them. They are in fact a larger player in waste management than we are, including for recycling and for solid-waste disposal in a landfill.

For unincorporated Yukon, everything that we are transferring is at the moment going into Whitehorse's landfill, so we depend on that relationship with them. Of course, all of the recycling processing facilities in the territory are located in Whitehorse so they are a slightly larger part of this than we are. We are working with them. We are in discussions with them, but how they provide diversion credits, or whether they do, is what they're looking at right now. We have not determined exactly what it means for the Yukon government long-term because that is very dependent on what the city does. Those are conversations with them and the work that's going on at an official level as well as the discussions that my colleague, the Minister for Environment, and I have both had with mayor and council including as recently as last month. We are continuing to work with them in these areas and hope to come to a mutually agreeable outcome in terms of a long-

term solution that is sustainable for City of Whitehorse and for the Yukon government.

What I would note is that the issue of who pays in quarterly payments versus yearly — the yearly payments, as the member indicated, was the city's structure; ours was quarterly.

If diversion credits are something that continue to be provided by both governments going forward, then certainly we would be open to talking about ways for reducing red tape on that. If the city moves to a different model and moves away from diversion credits, then that would become a moot point, and it is possible that we could continue diversion credits if the city did not. But again, all of this is under consideration right now. We are not going to rule out any options. Our focus has been, and the direction we have given to department staff, is that we are focused on long-term, sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide Yukoners access to the services they need and that, when we are engaging in purchasing services from NGOs or the private sector, we ensure — particularly when there are two or more potential suppliers of those services — that we are very mindful of doing so in a fair and equitable manner to both. This means either equal payments for the same services or, potentially — if a model is gone to in the future that sees either Whitehorse or ourselves contracting for services — the issue of fairness to existing service providers while ensuring that, in the long term, the intended outcome is the most cost-effective and effective model for Yukoners, remains our focus, while the city will, of course, will be responsible for determining what basis they make their decisions on. My understanding is that they are also interested in considering what is cost-effective, what is workable, and moving toward that in a way that is clear, open and transparent, and cost-effective for their citizens.

I hope that has answered the member's questions.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response.

This last year, there was a big investment in Zero Waste Yukon. This year we haven't heard of any similar level of commitment. How is Community Services supporting Zero Waste Yukon this year?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** We have provided funding to Zero Waste Yukon in the past to aid them with the educational work that they are doing in promotion of going toward zero waste. My understanding is that there hasn't been a formal request at this point for an additional contribution to this. My understanding is that officials are aware of the potential — that we are likely to be requested to provide funding for that. Once we receive a formal request, that will be assessed and considered.

We do certainly support the principle of continuing public education campaigns to encourage people to reduce their waste and to increase waste diversion, but a specific proposal will be assessed on its merits and considered within the context of other budgetary pressures as well. It is also something that we are likely to provide assistance for — that type of public education going forward as we have done in the past.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister. I'm going to switch gears here a little bit. We're going to move to another part of the Yukon — Mayo.

I would like to ask: What were the costs of mitigation efforts in controlling flooding in Mayo River downstream from Mayo B over the last four years? Did Yukon Energy contribute to the costs?

I would like to thank Community Services for stepping up to the plate and dealing with the flooding and paying associated costs. It was four years running on an emergency basis.

How was it determined that Community Services pay, and why was Yukon Energy not held liable? Yukon Electrical Company controls the river from Mayo Lake through a series of dams, weirs and river run to the point where the Mayo flows into Stewart River. Was any compensation paid to the Village of Mayo or to affected residents? Flooding is also occurring where the Mayo River crosses the Silver Trail. Is compensation being paid to the farmer whose land and buildings have been flooded? Sorry, just to correct — YECL. I meant to say that Yukon Energy Corporation controls the river in that part of the question. Yukon Energy Corporation controls the river.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** First of all, just to correct the record for the member, the member is making the conclusion that the flooding is the result of Mayo B when in fact the experts who are working on it — it hasn't been conclusively determined what the causes are of the flooding in Mayo — conclude that the actual problems of flooding did begin before Mayo B was operational.

One of the theories that I have been hearing, relying on local knowledge, from people in the area in the Village of Mayo — some of the speculation from town council has been that it might be related to increased volumes as a result of Mayo A, the original dam, having increased volume go through it after the Mayo-Dawson transmission line came on, and they started providing increased flows, compared to what had been happening during the couple of previous decades after mines dropped off as customers. But again, all of this is something that is not — no one quite knows whether this is caused by silting at the mouth of the river, which is another theory or another part of the theory, or whether it is caused by the effects of rime icing in the canyon. There has been a whole host of theories. Currently, Community Services is working with the Village of Mayo to develop a long-term solution to prevent flooding of the Mayo River. A preliminary design will be completed this winter with a permanent solution expected to be complete by spring 2016. Flooding has been occurring for the last several years.

Madam Chair, I should also note, for the member's question of who is paying for it and why, the reason that Community Services is covering it is twofold. One is that the Emergency Measures Organization, which responds, as part of its mandate, to emergencies, including flooding, is under Community Services and also Infrastructure branch, which has been responsible for doing a lot of this work because they're the best-equipped branch within the Yukon

government to do this work. It is also part of Community Services, so that is why it's out of Community Services' budget.

What I should also note to the member's question of why YEC isn't paying for it — for Yukon Energy Corporation to cover the costs means that it goes to ratepayers. Asking YEC to cover it because they are seen as being responsible — even if they are — is a request to add that cost on to the bills of Yukon citizens, who are paying the costs of electricity.

What I should just note under infrastructure is that in 2013-14, we had five flood mitigation projects with a 2013-14 expenditure of over \$2 million.

I don't know the exact numbers on Mayo in front of me. We can undertake to get those but I believe it was over \$1 million this past winter, because this past winter was the worst winter for flooding and icing challenges in Mayo that we've seen and at this point, nobody quite knows why.

Again, the theories range from ground saturation from water, silting at the mouth of the river, problems with river flow caused by the effects of increased disturbance and currents and rime icing caused in the canyon below the dam. There are a lot of different theories out there. What we have done is contract an expert from — I'm blanking on the name, but we've contracted a firm with expertise in these areas to provide advice to us in developing a long-term solution and we're working closely with the municipality of Mayo on an ongoing basis to address this.

I also myself have spoken to Mayor Scott Bolton from Mayo on a number of occasions as well as to the entire council about this issue. During the problems last winter, I was in contact with Mayor Bolton on a number of occasions and invited him to call me at any time if there was an emergency occurring that wasn't being addressed because of the importance of ensuring that that municipality not flood.

So again we have a very close working relationship with the Village of Mayo in this area and appreciate the contributions that have been provided by Mayor Scott Bolton and members of the village council, as well as administrative staff, who have played an important role in managing the flooding problem, and will undoubtedly continue to do so throughout this winter, when we expect there will be flooding issues and expect that we will be able, through the dedicated work of staff and the town — both council and administration — and through other community members, to manage that issue.

Again, just jumping back to the member's specific question of, why not have YEC pay the cost? It is for the same reason that we funded infrastructure, including building Mayo B and other upgrades, including line improvements that have been made in the past years, and the work done within the last couple years of expanding the one electrical substation out on the Mayo Road to meet the demands of service at Whistle Bend and in the area.

The reason why we have covered those costs out of areas other than Yukon Energy Corporation's budget is that if Yukon Energy covers it — unless it is a contribution from the Yukon government, the Government of Canada or some other

public source — they have no choice but to put it into the rate base and when they put an asset or a flooding mitigation cost into the rate base, that means that Yukoners see their electrical bills rise.

So that is why the costs of managing a flood — even if ultimately they are determined to be related to what Yukon Energy Corporation is doing in terms of water management — that we believe it is better to provide that money out of the Department of Community Services rather than causing people's electrical rates to go up.

What I should just note with this entire situation is this is something that no one had predicted and no one is quite sure what the cause is of the flooding situation in Mayo. There have also been — throughout the territory — other areas where there have been water problems that include flooding on people's property or increased problems on other rivers that can be due to climate change or other exceptional events.

Without a thorough study by experts to determine root causes and the best ways of managing it, we are in a situation of continuing to manage and address those challenges and look for a solution that is cost-effective and meets the long-term needs in those communities.

**Mr. Barr:** I thank the minister for his response.

Recently the minister announced a change to the funding arrangements with community clubs. I would like to ask for some clarity in how much money and which community clubs — is there going to be a certain amount allocated here and there — or is there a rhyme or reason to who would receive what amount and so on and so forth?

I know that the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, for example, was based upon the people living in the area and a number of them — or their mailboxes — that's how — per capita, per person — money was assessed to that area and a number of them receive their mail at the Carcross Cut-off, for example, so budgeted money that would have been funded to Mount Lorne just never got there.

I'm interested in hearing — and it's welcome for the folks who are trying to operate and be fiscally accountable to the programs that they do serve in their different areas of it — could the minister provide clarity on how that is going to all fold out?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** The changes to the community recreational assistant grants are based on — attempting to assist them with core expenditures and facility operations and staffing costs for providing those facilities in their community.

The changes that were prepared include revisions of the funding formula to financially support local authorities through recreation and amendments and updates to reflect current practices and provide clarity. Given their specific situation, the proposed — pardon me — I'm saying proposed because the note was originally prepared before Cabinet approved the regulations.

The now-updated formula is less complex and we believe it's fair to all communities. The formula inputs include operation and maintenance cost, salaries, wages, specific facility portfolio — that being what facilities are operating. For example, one of the significant variables is whether they

have a pool or not, which is a significant cost element. That's just one of the examples.

It also includes inflation and spatial index — which, if I understand correctly, is the calculation of the total space that they operate in. The changes that were made to this — again I would like to acknowledge and thank the Member for Kluane for his work in bringing this issue forward. Pardon me — the spatial index is distance from Whitehorse, not the space in the facility. It's based on the increased costs for equipment, et cetera — distance from Whitehorse. Pardon me. I correct my earlier statement on that. It's based on distance from Whitehorse, not the specific facility size.

What I can tell the member, for example, is the new formula is one that, after the Member for Kluane brought forward this request on behalf of his constituents, we took a look at the formula and officials went to work on trying to modernize the formula and come with one that is fair, that addresses real needs and that is simpler for communities to use.

The percentage increases for facilities starting alphabetically: Beaver Creek has seen an increase of 143 percent; Burwash Landing saw 327-percent increase; Carcross saw a 47.8-percent increase; Mount Lorne saw a 67.4-percent increase in their grant; Destruction Bay, a 250-percent increase; Keno, a 460-percent increase; Marsh Lake, a 110-percent increase; Old Crow, a 155.9-percent increase; Pelly Crossing, a 98.7-percent increase; Ross River, a 36-percent increase; Tagish, a 92.9-percent increase; and Upper Liard, a 73.2-percent increase.

Those are based on the calculation of what their facilities are and are intended to assist with real costs. They aren't based so much on — as the member was understanding — the population of the area, although, I think that may have been more of a consideration in the past. They are intended to help them keep the lights on for the facility in the area.

What those increases boil down to is: the new funding for Beaver Creek is \$80,798 starting in fiscal year 2015-16; for Burwash Landing, a new level of \$31,670; for Carcross, a new level of \$81,018, and that is — sorry, I should have given the previous amounts on there — Beaver Creek goes from \$33,000 and change to \$80,000 and change; Burwash Landing goes from \$7,400 to \$31,670; Carcross goes from \$54,000 and change to \$81,000 and change; Mount Lorne goes from \$39,000 and change to \$65,959; Destruction Bay goes from \$7,000 and change to \$25,100; Keno goes from \$3,000 and change to \$17,900; Marsh Lake goes from \$39,000 and change to \$83,491; Old Crow goes from \$46,000 and change to \$118,000 and change; Pelly Crossing goes from \$51,480 to \$102,300; Ross River goes from \$81,000 and change to \$110,955; Tagish goes from \$35,000 and change to \$68,000 and change; and Upper Liard goes from \$18,000 and change to \$32,000 and change. The total combined new funding is \$817,860 — again, a significant increase.

Again, credit goes to the Member for Kluane for bringing forward this request for updating the community recreational assistant grants to unincorporated Yukon. It's another example

of how government has increased our support for sport and recreation across the territory.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Cathers 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. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

As the hour is close enough to 5:30, this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.*