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3rd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2019 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| NAME | CONSTITUENCY | PORTFOLIO |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hon. Sandy Silver | Klondike | Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance |
| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Stacey Hassard | Leader of the Official Opposition Pelly-Nisutlin | Scott Kent | Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South |
| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kate White | Leader of the Third Party Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |
| Liz Hanson | Whitehorse Centre |

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 13, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I ask my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to please help me in welcoming Tristan Peter to the Legislature today. Tristan is the great-nephew of the late Joel Peter. We have a dear friend from Old Crow, Catherine Merangu, as well as Frances Ross-Furlong, and of course Vuntut Gwitchin member Stephen Mills. Welcome today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would ask my colleagues to help me welcome members of our staff from the Tourism and Culture department. We have Jonathan Parker, Assistant Deputy Minister of Strategic Initiatives; Pierre Germain, Director of Tourism; Sarah Marsh, Manager of Industry Services; and my executive assistant, Edwine Veniat.

Thank you very much for coming.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Joel Peter

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, the Official Opposition, and the Third Party to pay tribute to a Gwich'in elder, the late Joel Peter. The Gwich'in communities mourn the loss of a very kind and gentle elder — one of our last true, Gwich'in knowledge-keepers, known as a gatekeeper and educator of our Gwich'in practices and teachings.

Joel Peter, the son of the late Tabitha Kyikavichik, and the nephew to the late Reverend Dr. Ellen Bruce, sadly left this world on October 9, with his family at his side in Vancouver. In the true Gwich'in fashion, while following our traditional practices, Joel was educated in the Yay'no'daii — long ago — way by those two wonderful Gwich'in matriarchs.

Joel was held in the highest regard in Old Crow. He never sought recognition or praise for his contributions in preserving our heritage and culture. He worked endless hours with the Gwich'in heritage team documenting and recording the old language and interpreting the stories recorded from the long-ago ancestors. A true elder, in his quest to preserve the language, he quietly supported all young people in our

Gwich'in communities by either helping them to learn the language or educating them with stories of days gone by.

Joel was a man of few words, but those words that he shared were wise words. He was a friend and a mentor to many. A lot of hearts are broken, but many lives have been made better as a result of his teachings. Joel knew that children raised and steeped in their language and culture have proven to be academically better off and stable contributors to our community. The good memories and teachings that he left us will bring comfort to each and every one of those who have come into contact with our Gwich'in legend.

Joel spent many hours as a Canadian Ranger. His most informative role was to share his survival skills in the harsh northern climate with his fellow Ranger colleagues. He also spent a lot of years with his colleagues on the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council. This was a role that he took very seriously, as he was able to emphasize the importance of local traditional knowledge and merging that with the contemporary practices resulting in a co-management regime that all agreed to in good-faith discussions. The teachings that he so willingly shared sustained the Gwich'in people and will for millennia.

He spent his whole life on the land, on his trapline, in Old Crow Flats. He was a hunter and a provider for his family; he especially provided support to single moms and the grandmothers in our community. Joel could often be seen heading out on the land to his trapline with a nephew or a younger person from the community to show them the ropes. He was a phenomenal man — professor of the land, mentor of the language. He was the most humble of souls, one of the few out trapping but also living his quiet leadership role in guiding Gwich'in language research. He respected hard work, good humour, and a new story.

With a life spent on the land, he was an invaluable leader to the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council, giving advice and direction toward new protected areas, like the Ch'ihillii Chik wetlands, the Peel land use plan, and the north Yukon land use plan — plans that have ingenious and subtle ways to get the talkers to move the conversation along from discussion to action. Most notably, his success and contributions to many land use plans in the Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory have proven to be most valuable and resulted in successful plans — always merging, of course, traditional practices with contemporary measures.

He was always interested in learning. He took college math courses in his 70s because "It's good to keep learning new things," he said. He liked spending time with John, his tutor, and in tutoring the young people in our community or anyone who lived their life with kindness, humility, and good intentions.

Not only was he eager to work with or educate his own people, but he would offer and share with university students who frequented Old Crow, helping them to get grounded while assisting with their university research or thesis papers.

Joel took notice of and supported the good he saw around him in Old Crow by educating young leaders, young moms, emerging students, and athletes. He was known for his patience

when working with new leaders like me. He worked with us all to have an in-depth knowledge of Din'gi'jik, our Gwich'in language, culture and beliefs.

In his final years, he genuinely shared his knowledge and comprehension of the dinjii ZhuH Kyuu — which means “in the native way as the grandparents have taught” — in an ongoing effort to preserve dii'gii'jik. His nephew Geoffrey Peter so eloquently described his uncle by stating — and I quote: “He spent his whole life developing his skills and knowledge necessary to make a safe and final journey.”

I personally would like to describe Joel in these words: “Yeindoo gwinah'in — that one sees far ahead — six or seven years ahead into the future” — always looking to preserve and document our traditions for our community to use into the future.

Hai' choo. Greatest of thanks to Joel. Mahsi'.

Applause

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Introduction of visitors outside of the time provided for in the Order Paper.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the grade 12 Vanier social justice class to the Assembly, taught by my spouse, Janet Clarke. I have the list. I apologize in advance if I miss anyone, and I also apologize in advance if I mispronounce anybody's name.

So, welcome to the Assembly: Hanz Alojipan, Arden Anderson, Prabjyot Bajwa, Tatiana Cabiso, Cindy Cacatian, Jose Echeveria, Sasha Farrow, Johan Geshev, Thomas Janzen, Benjamin Kates, Tony Kim, Shirley Lehr, Brian Mabilog, Jamvee Madrigal, Christine Miral, Nints'ia Murphy, Katambe Nguvauva, Uno Nguvauva, Marithe Planas, Abby Roberts, Chantelle Scheper, Sonjaa Schmidt, Jimbert Trinidad, Chad Williams, and Lucas Yuill.

Welcome, all — and as I said, I apologize for my mispronunciation in advance. Welcome to the Assembly.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with partners and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive Yukon strategy in response to the final report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to:

(1) establish a publication date for regulations giving effect to Bill No. 23, *Lobbyists Registration Act*; and

(2) table the communications plan for informing the public, including lobbyists, about the existence of a Yukon lobbyist registry and how it will operate.

Ms. McLeod: I rise to give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all documents from the Government of Yukon outlining:

(1) why the recent Housing First project came in at \$1.4 million overbudget;

(2) why the opening of the recent Housing First project was delayed;

(3) what the total operating costs will be going forward; and

(4) how many new FTEs will be created to staff the facility.

Mr. Istchenko: I rise in the House today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to do a better job next year of ensuring that highways that get ripped up actually get resurfaced the same year by taking actions, including ensuring that contracts are issued early enough in the year to allow resurfacing to be done before the end of the construction season.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that the Champagne dump is open for public use by taking actions, including:

(1) working with the contractor to resolve the current service disruptions;

(2) making sure that the facility is open during scheduled hours; and

(3) recognizing the importance of ensuring that, when tendering landfill contracts in the future, bids are assessed on a value-driven model that includes local participation and knowledge to better meet the needs of communities.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism development strategy

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today to speak about an important milestone in the implementation of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy — Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future. — 2018-2028*.

Tourism is a vital part of our economy and a sector we want to grow sustainably. Our Liberal government is committed to doing that. This strategy is multi-year and it is goal-oriented. It lays out a vision for tourism in Yukon to be a vibrant and sustainable component of our economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

Measuring Yukoners' attitudes is a new direction for a tourism strategy, which again puts us at the forefront of

Canadian and international tourism destinations. Yukoners deserve to have their voices heard on tourism and will play a critical role in determining its future in the territory. I'm very pleased to announce that we now have the results of our inaugural Yukon resident perceptions of tourism survey.

The survey was conducted from mid-July to mid-September 2019 and asked Yukoners for their perceptions on whether tourism is good for Yukon overall, whether it is good for their community, whether it benefits the economy, and whether they feel it contributes positively to Yukoners' quality of life. I'm proud to say that the initial results for the survey show high satisfaction and support for Yukon's tourism industry, with 94 percent of Yukoners feeling that tourism is good for the Yukon and 89 percent believing that tourism is good for their community.

However — and more importantly — we now have established a baseline for measuring this goal going forward. We will administer the survey every two years. If satisfaction levels remain high, that is a good thing, but if the satisfaction levels begin to drop, this will be useful information. It will tell us that we need to do further research to learn why it's dropping and change course in the way tourism is being managed.

This is at the heart of ensuring that tourism in Yukon is sustainable. If Yukoners are concerned about how tourism is impacting the quality of life in Yukon, then we must take action.

Tourism can only succeed if Yukoners are engaged and supportive. This is also at the heart of evidence-based decision-making, which is the hallmark of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

In conclusion, the survey results suggest that we are in a good place when it comes to Yukoners' attitudes about tourism development, and our goal through the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* is to ensure that we stay there. They reflect very well on our dedicated, professional, world-class tourism industry. Our industry works so hard and does such an amazing job welcoming visitors to the territory, but more importantly, we are meeting our commitments to implement the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* and to establish baseline data to objectively measure the success of the strategy on a regular basis.

I thank you for the opportunity to remark on these highlights and look forward to discussing further details with members opposite.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for the opportunity to respond today. I appreciate the minister letting us know that the government conducted a survey asking Yukoners if they feel tourism is good. I think it's fantastic that so many Yukoners feel this way. Obviously, it is such an important part of our territory's economy.

I do have some questions about the cost benefit of this survey, though. How much did the government spend to go out and ask Yukoners whether or not they feel that tourism is good? What is the return on investment for this expenditure? What tangible benefit do Yukoners get from the government

conducting a survey on whether or not Yukoners feel that tourism is good?

Regarding the survey, I took a quick look through it to see who was surveyed. It says that 635 households completed the survey; however, it does not break it down by households and which communities. Can the minister let us know how many households in the communities were surveyed?

I also have some questions about some conflicting numbers throughout the report. Page 6 of the survey results say that 35 percent of Yukoners thought visitor traffic negatively affects travel on Yukon highways and in the communities; however, if you go to page 9, it says that only 16 percent of Yukoners say that visitor traffic negatively affects travel on Yukon highways. So that is interesting.

Page 6 says 21 percent of Yukoners think that tourism has a negative impact on Yukon's natural resources. Again, page 9 says that 13 percent think that it is a main concern.

There are a number of examples like this throughout the entire document that do seem to provide different numbers for very similar questions. I'm sure that the minister has a good explanation, but I'm wondering what the value to Yukoners is in having different results for what is essentially the same question.

I notice that the minister closed her remarks by saying that she looked forward to discussing further details with us today, so I'm hopeful that this means that she will be able to answer these questions in her follow-up.

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon NDP is indeed happy that it is the Minister of Tourism and Culture and not the Minister of Highways and Public Works, as the statement sent to the opposition indicated this morning. We are happy that the ministerial statement on the results of the Yukon resident perceptions on tourism survey has been released. It was quietly posted yesterday on the government site without being tabled in this House.

We understand that the survey was apparently conducted over the summer and into the fall. It would be useful — as we heard my colleague from the Yukon Party just say — to have heard from the minister what the number of respondents was and what their demographic and geographic distribution was. However, from a quick perusal of the survey, it would appear that the minister is basing her rosy assessment on responses from 635 people who agreed to participate in this survey. That may indeed be a good starting point.

It is also interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the minister does acknowledge in this statement the importance of ensuring that tourism is sustainable. However, rather than waiting to see if Yukoners are concerned about how tourism is impacting the quality of life in Yukon and then deciding that they must take action, one would think, given that this survey is ostensibly part of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — sustainable tourism for 2018-28 — that the minister responsible for the success of Yukon tourism would determine that strategically. You don't wait until a problem occurs to try to change course. You anticipate the challenges, and you work to strategically address them.

This fall, the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon hosted its annual meeting in Dawson City. The minister was there along with many of us, as were key officials. A reasonable expectation would be a statement from the minister regarding measures to ensure the sustainability of Yukon's tourism sector as we work to grow the sector to reflect the substantive, important issues raised by several of the keynote speakers at the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon conference. For example, the work of Megan Epler Wood — Harvard-based founder of the first ecotourism institute in the world — spoke on a range of issues relating to managing the invisible burden of tourism. Mr. Speaker, the evidence and the experience gleaned from other parts of Canada and of the world can be key to avoiding the same pitfalls and the same negative local reaction from poorly planned and poorly implemented tourism strategies.

Rather than simply using the platform of a ministerial statement to pat herself and her colleagues on the back, perhaps the minister could read *Sustainable Tourism on a Finite Planet — Environmental, Business and Policy Solutions* by the Tourism Industry Association's keynote speaker and report back to this House on how her strategic plan for sustainable tourism addresses the key factors identified therein.

We look forward to that analysis from the Minister of Tourism on this vitally important part of Yukon's economy.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I do thank the members opposite for their remarks, although some of them seemed a bit personal — but will overlook that because this is really a vitally important part of our Yukon economy. I'm happy to stand today to speak about something that's so important.

I will answer a few of the questions that were posed in terms of the cost. The total cost for this survey was \$16,500. We initiated the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to conduct the survey. Every community in Yukon participated — 23 Yukon communities. We do have the ability to break down and customize the results of the survey into the seven Yukon tourism regions and some individual communities that we were really interested in ensuring that we had specific data on.

I would be happy to have more technical briefings with the members opposite. Again, this is brand new data for us. The *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* was borne out of the largest public engagement process undertaken by the Department of Tourism and Culture. This process was guided by a steering committee made up of 15 stakeholders or partners representing the tourism industry, Yukon First Nations, the arts and culture community, as well as Yukon government.

All of the goals that came out of the strategy were very strategic and came from all of our stakeholders and from Yukoners. As mentioned, a critical aspect of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* is that it is goal-oriented. Where we establish goals, we must establish mechanisms to objectively measure the progress toward achieving these goals.

This certainly isn't about me patting myself on the back in any way. It is about ensuring that we have good baseline data to go forward. The results are what they are — 94 percent of

Yukoners who were surveyed felt that tourism was serving us, that they were happy and have a good attitude about it.

To be specific, the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee endorsed and proposed the following three goals: to double revenue to Yukon businesses attributable to tourism by 2028; establish a framework that measures the sustainability of tourism development; and ensure that at least 80 percent of Yukoners have a positive attitude toward tourism.

Goal No. 1 is business revenue growth and already has a reliable indicator in place. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics conducts the Yukon business survey, which collects information about revenue and gross domestic product attributable to tourism. So we already have that mechanism in place. Goal No. 2 is to establish a sustainability framework, which is all about ensuring that tourism is managed sustainably. Ensuring such a framework will put Yukon at the forefront of the sustainable tourism movement in Canada and, indeed, globally.

Mr. Speaker, I will just speak now because I just have to address one of the comments that the Member of the Third Party made about the tourism conference in Dawson. In fact, most of the keynote speakers said that Yukon was at the cutting edge and leading in a lot of ways. I will be happy to continue to have that conversation in this House.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor upgrades

Mr. Hassard: I have some questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works regarding planned changes to the Alaska Highway near the Erik Nielsen International Airport. An open house was held last night at the Transportation Museum to go over this project. It appears that this multi-year project will expand the Alaska Highway up to eight lanes in certain areas and impact a number of businesses in the area either directly or indirectly. The minister confirmed yesterday that the Liberals were in discussions with the Airport Chalet about expropriating their land and building. The plans also see the government having to buy out a portion of the property designated for a new gas station and convenience store.

Mr. Speaker, we are wondering if the minister can tell us how much money has been budgeted to buy out property owners that will have land or buildings expropriated for this project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm more than happy this afternoon to talk about the Alaska Highway safety projects we have planned over the next several years. The government has done extensive assessment and planning work along the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse. We're focusing on intersection safety improvements that consider all users, including large trucks, personal vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. This is a very narrow stretch of highway. There is an awful lot of traffic moving through this area, and it isn't the safest stretch of road in the territory.

So, we're going to make some really profound improvements that will make that a much safer stretch of road for residents and for traffic going through there. The improvements to Range Road, along with a new intersection in the vicinity of the new Toyota dealership on the Alaska Highway, are now substantially complete.

Mr. Hassard: I guess yesterday when we got an answer from this minister, that was the first and last time that is going to happen this Sitting. This plan also calls for new access to the Salvation Army Adult Resource Centre halfway house; however, we were told last night that the government is also in negotiations with the Salvation Army to purchase this property as well.

Can the minister tell us why these negotiations are taking place and what the government plans to do with this property?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have to disagree with the Leader of the Official Opposition, because I know that, yesterday on the second question, he complimented me on my second answer. So, there we have two answers, and I'm going to give another now, Mr. Speaker. He has already contradicted himself.

The fact is that we have a very narrow stretch of road. There's an awful lot of development that has happened on the right-of-way along that stretch of road, and we are working very hard with the property owners to make sure that we acquire the right-of-way access that's necessary for the safe use of highways.

I am not going to, on the floor of the House, tell the member opposite how much our negotiating stance is. That would be counterproductive to a government that is in respectful negotiations with property owners in that area to acquire the right-of-way land that is currently occupied.

As far as the safety improvements, we can talk about that all afternoon. We are doing great work there putting in new crosswalks and lights that the residents of Hillcrest and Valleyview have asked for over the years. We're actually moving forward with that to make this a stretch of highway that's a lot safer for motorists, for bicyclists, for pedestrians, and for residents who use this area all the time.

Mr. Hassard: So, just for the minister's information, when I say "first and last", that doesn't mean two answers.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners deserve to know how government is spending their money, so I think it's unfortunate that the minister refuses to answer this.

Over the past three years, the opposition has identified other safety concerns in the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. We've been told by this minister that, for the time being, the government is focusing its efforts on the project that will expand the size of the highway in Hillcrest to up to eight lanes in certain intersections. However, this project has three phases and it will take place over three construction seasons.

Mr. Speaker, we want to know: Will this be the only project that deals with safety concerns in the Whitehorse corridor over these three years?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can assure the members opposite that safety is on a lot of people's minds. This is the project we have identified right now.

I have been talking to my colleague in Copperbelt North who has raised some concerns with me on several occasions about areas north of town. I have taken a ride-along with the Member for Copperbelt South who has also expressed many pressing needs along the Alaska Highway. I know that my colleagues north of town have also expressed some.

There is an awful lot of need here, Mr. Speaker, and we are working through it in a thoughtful and methodical manner. I have talked in this House an awful lot about safety. We're doing the brush-clearing across all 5,000 kilometres of road. That's a big initiative we're doing.

We're also working very hard to make sure that the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse is improved. This year, we have taken some great measures in and around Range Road and fixed some pressing needs there — around Sumanik Drive and Range Road around the Toyota dealership and others and the new municipal services building.

Next year, we are going to turn our sights to the Alaska Highway through the area constrained by the airport. That's a really, really tricky piece of road because it is so narrow and it has a lot of users who want to use it. We have heard about the bicyclists and we have all seen those. So, we're going to continue to work to make this a safe road for all users.

Question re: Waters Act and regulations

Mr. Kent: On November 7, the Premier told this Legislature that his government has developed a new interpretation of the *Waters Act* and the regulations. He suggested that this work to reinterpret the act and the regulations was done in coordination with the chair of the Water Board. His exact quote was — and I will quote again from Hansard: "... the people who are in place now, including the secretariat, including the board, the good folks in Executive Council Office — all working together on a new interpretation — a new interpretation of very solid regulations and legislation."

So, yesterday I asked the Premier about this and he said that there was no new interpretation. So, Mr. Speaker, who are we to believe: last week's Premier, who said his government came up with a new interpretation of the *Waters Act* and the regulations, or yesterday's Premier, who said that there is no new interpretation?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Certainly not the Yukon Party.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the Government of Yukon and the Yukon Water Board signed an agreement that set out a governance relationship between the two parties. The memorandum of understanding was an important foundational step in clarifying the roles and the working relationships, as I have said here in the past on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. The Yukon government and the Yukon Water Board recognize the need for ongoing information exchange relative to their prospective jurisdictions and areas therein while also respecting the independent decision-making authority of the Water Board with respect to applications.

Since April 1, 2003, the Yukon Water Board has had the authority, under the *Placer Mining Act*, to perform certain functions, and also under the *Waters Act*. Again, these functions

need to be looked at from time to time. I am glad that this government has decided to endeavour to help with industry, but to also help with the quasi-judicial board when it comes to really important issues like the protection and use of our waters.

Mr. Kent: So, on November 7, the Premier said that the Executive Council Office was part of some process to come up with a new interpretation of the *Waters Act* and the regulations. Yesterday, he said there was no new interpretation. Both versions of the Premier's story can't be true.

I will just remind the Premier that Yukoners deserve accurate information out of all of their elected officials. MLAs are their community's voice in the Legislative Assembly, and when the Premier uses his time in this House to spread misinformation instead of advocating for his constituents — well, that is disappointing.

Can the Premier explain what he meant on November 7 when he said the government — including the Executive Council Office — were all working together on a new interpretation of the *Waters Act* and regulations?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, misinformation is definitely the bailiwick of the Yukon Party and it is always a great opportunity for me to get up on the floor of the Legislative Assembly and clear the record. As noted in the agreement, we also shared an interest and have committed to working collaboratively to improve efficiencies and the regulatory process for water licences and for class 4 mining operations. I am very pleased with our communications and collaboration with the Water Board and we are continuing to engage on various topics, including wetlands, and we spoke about that yesterday.

The members opposite don't want to see a hearing, but again, I think that more communication — whether that is with the secretariat, with the chair, or with the board, me, industry, or First Nation governments — their land departments — you name it — these are great conversations to be had. The members opposite can criticize us for saying “the Yukon” one day and then “the Yukon” the next day, but what is really important is that these conversations are happening.

What's really important is that we're working in collaboration; we're not using — unlike the previous government — the quasi-judicial shield against trying to work on issues of multiple interests not only for the Water Board, not only for the secretariat, the chair, and me, but also for the industry and people who use and want to protect our water systems.

Mr. Kent: Also on November 7, the Premier told this Legislature that his government had been working on reducing red tape with the YESAA and Water Board processes. Yesterday, we asked for a tangible example of any red tape that has been reduced over the last three years. The Premier couldn't point to even one single example. Instead, all he talked about was new processes and some of the hoops his government has created for industry to jump through. But as referenced, he has also pointed to the Water Board MOU as being the silver bullet for this industry.

So, I'm going to ask him one specific question with respect to that MOU: As a result of that MOU, has the average time it takes to approve a licence improved?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I see what the member opposite did there with the “silver bullet” comment. That was very clever.

Mr. Speaker, this is extremely important work that we're engaging in. As noted, again, this agreement — we are working on shared interests, and we have a common ability to work together collaboratively to improve the efficiencies of the regulatory process, and that's exactly what we're going to continue to do.

I know that the member opposite might be a little hard done by, because in his time, mining was drying up, and now, under the direction of the Deputy Premier and the whole-of-government approach here — working past just our government organizations, but into the quasi-judicial world and having greater communication there with the Water Board and respecting their opinions — I guess the former Leader of the NDP doesn't want us to do that — but again, we believe that these conversations and these memoranda of understanding or even the MLII process through Energy, Mines and Resources or the YESAA reset or the memorandum of understanding with working with other indigenous governments in the Yukon — all of these initiatives are things that the other government wouldn't do. They went to Ottawa with Bill S-6 without really engaging on major changes to our industry, and we're still dealing with the ramifications of those actions.

I can see why the members opposite, as they peer in from the outside, are worried about this process, but we're not hearing the same from the First Nation governments that we are trying to move forward with on these issues.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor upgrades

Ms. Hanson: When the Minister of Highways and Public Works announced that this government would be pursuing improvements to the Alaska Highway corridor, he said they would be doing things differently from the previous Yukon Party government, and for a moment, things looked promising.

The department brought in highway safety expert Dr. Paul de Leur and a representative from Yukon's chief medical officer of health to speak to the importance of building infrastructure that protects pedestrians and promotes active transport. They both stated that the best way to protect walkers and cyclists was to separate them from traffic. These principles, however, don't seem to have made it into the plans for the Alaska Highway expansion between Hillcrest and the airport.

At a Highways and Public Works presentation last night, residents again questioned why this government refuses to include a separated crossing like an underpass or a bridge. Can the minister explain why this government is opposed to incorporating a separate crossing for active transport into the Alaska Highway expansion plans?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Well, I will continue my answer. I am glad to talk about this, because it is very important to Whitehorse, Mr. Speaker — the entire city.

The government has done extensive assessment and planning work along the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse. We are focused on intersection safety improvements and considered all users, including large trucks, personal vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Improvements to Range Road, along with a new intersection in the vicinity of the new Toyota dealership on the Alaska Highway, are now substantially complete. The new multi-purpose trail connecting the southern end of Range Road to the airport and Black Street trail is now paved. The traffic lights are now installed and are operational. Having a pedestrian-controlled traffic signal crossing will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

We will continue to keep stakeholders informed and seek their input. I know that the members opposite were at the meeting last night. I know that they talked about an underpass, and the engineering difficulties with that are that it is a very flat piece of ground and how much land is actually required to put in an underpass. I don't know why the member opposite didn't hear that answer last night, but that is really what happened and, when we looked at it from an engineering point of view, why it was difficult and expensive to put in an underpass in that area. It was something we looked at and were not able to do, but we have got other safety improvements to make sure that cyclists, pedestrians, and others can cross the Alaska Highway safely in front of Hillcrest and Valleyview.

Ms. Hanson: The government will be investing tens of millions of dollars on the expansion of the Alaska Highway with the stated aim of improving safety and increasing traffic flow. While those goals may be achieved, it is apparent that supporting pedestrian safety and active transportation are less important to this government.

The City of Whitehorse transportation demand management plan sets a target of doubling the percentage of residents who use active transport by 2036, with the hope of offsetting emissions and reducing congestion from the city's growing population. The city's 2018 bicycle network plan surveyed Whitehorse residents and found that more than 50 percent of cyclists felt unsafe or very unsafe and that the biggest deterrent to cycling was traffic safety.

A controlled crossing out of Hillcrest is at least two years away, and residents at last night's meeting were clear that a traffic light is not a safe option for crossing multiple highway lanes.

What meetings did the Government of Yukon have with the City of Whitehorse to ensure that the highway expansion complements the city's active transportation goals?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the former Leader of the Third Party's interest in alternate forms of transportation. I too am a cyclist, as is my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. We are also cyclists on this side of the House. I cross that highway myself on my way to work in the morning in the dark of winter. It's a little bit lighter now because of daylight saving time, but I do cross the highway and do appreciate some of the concerns that have been raised there.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a controlled traffic light on the highway because of the work that we have done. It is not yet at Hillcrest. I wish there was some way that we could expedite the

work in front of Hillcrest, but, Mr. Speaker, this takes a lot of planning and a lot of work on the part of Highways and Public Works. I'm very pleased with the work of the engineering department in Highways and Public Works with the consultations that they have done with the community to make sure that this project that we heard from the community was a priority. We understand that, from a territory-wide perspective, this is a very important stretch of highway; it is the only highway we have that connects the south to Dawson City and to Alaska. It's a very important stretch of highway. There's a lot of traffic going through there, and it's important that it's safe. It does impact the communities of Hillcrest, Valleyview, and others.

We have made an investment, and this work is going to be done in two years.

Ms. Hanson: The minister just said that it's not safe now and that it's going to be two years before it may be partially safe.

The minister often talks about how keen he is to modernize government, yet this project seems to be looking to the past rather than to the future. On-road vehicle transportation accounts for nearly 50 percent of all emissions in the City of Whitehorse, and the Alaska Highway expansion is clearly not geared toward reducing personal vehicle use.

The Premier has said that the Yukon government is applying a climate lens to all of its projects. This government has also stated that its strategy for climate change, energy, and a green economy will be released shortly, yet here we have a significant infrastructure project that will do little to encourage active transportation options.

Mr. Speaker, how did the application of the Yukon government's climate lens impact the decision-making on this project, and can the minister commit to tabling the climate lens analysis that it did on the Alaska Highway corridor project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say again that we're focusing on intersection safety improvements that consider all users, including large trucks, personal vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

The work that we're doing in terms of climate change and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels — from the carbon-pricing mechanism that we endorse on this side of the House to the improvements that we're making in charging stations and electronic vehicles and changing the fleet of vehicles that the Yukon government uses to actually promoting bicycling and other areas — this is all part of our work, and we'll have a plan coming forward fairly soon that the members opposite can consult.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that climate change is part of our assessment and planning. Studies show that keeping road pavement in good condition and increasing the efficiency of traffic flow reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Speaker, that is one concrete method we are using to make sure that we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions or actually start that process. We are also promoting biking. We have bike paths that now run right alongside the highway. They're going to be improved, and we're working with the city on many projects to make sure that we do keep the changing climate in our sights.

Question re: Motor vehicle reclassifications

Mr. Hassard: Last week, we asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works a number of questions about changes to motor vehicle classifications, and we didn't receive a response. Currently, you can choose what gross vehicle weight you want to register your commercial vehicle for, depending on your use of that particular vehicle. However, under the government's new guidelines, it appears that all commercial vehicles must be registered at the manufacturer's specified gross vehicle weight. This would have implications for hundreds of Yukoners who have three-quarter ton pickups or larger. It means that the owners of these vehicles would now have to run logbooks, and their allowable hours of driving would be limited.

Can the minister confirm if this is, in fact, the case?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe that the member opposite is talking about our new YuDriv system, the replacement system that we commissioned just recently. I had a ministerial statement on that fact, and I'm more than happy to talk about it again, because it represents a modernization of our service delivery standards and a way that we're improving the public's access to our motor vehicles registration system.

The Government of Yukon is committed to improving service delivery through modernization and innovation, and we're in the process of replacing Yukon's various transportation applications with a single, integrated client-centred system. The first phase of the project, which replaces the old driver's licensing and vehicle registration system, launched on November 4.

This first step involves putting in place better procedures and safeguards to protect Yukoners' personal information. Once fully implemented, YuDriv will allow Yukoners to perform more driver's licensing and permitting transactions online, thus saving them a trip to the Motor Vehicles office. The next phase of YuDriv will introduce improved online access, and we are focused on ensuring an effective transition to the new system.

Mr. Hassard: We definitely did not get an answer to that question, so we will try another.

As the minister may or may not know, most pickup trucks — three-quarter ton or larger — have a manufactured gross vehicle weight greater than 4,500 kilograms. It appears that these new rules will require all commercial pickups three-quarter ton and larger to report to highway weigh scales every time they are within a 20-kilometre radius. This will cause increased pressure on the weigh scales both in Whitehorse and Watson Lake.

Can the minister confirm if this is in fact the case, and how will the government deal with the increased pressures at these two weigh scales?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As far as this new system that we're talking about goes, Mr. Speaker, the priority of the system relates to driver licensing and registration. It also has many other components, which we will roll out in the near future over the next couple of years. That will greatly enhance the public's ability to access and to deal with the Yukon government services online.

Highways and Public Works has been in constant contact with the city, for example, about the new system and upcoming changes from the project's very beginning, and this will certainly improve the way that businesses, the public, and other clients access our motor vehicles system.

It will be an improvement, a modernization, and an efficiency that all Yukoners will benefit from.

Mr. Hassard: Gauging from that response and the way that the minister is fumbling through his briefing binder there, I am going to guess that he has no idea, but I will try again.

As I pointed out, most pickup trucks — three-quarter ton and larger — have a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight of more than 4,500 kilograms. It appears that, under these new rules, these pickups will now be classified the same as large commercial trucks, so it appears that these commercially registered pickups will be required to have safety inspections every month. This, of course, will have financial implications on a lot of Yukoners.

Before the government decided to make these changes, did they consult with Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, Mr. Speaker, along with Canadians across the country, Yukoners' hearts were broken by the Humboldt tragedy. Governments have a responsibility to do what they can to improve highway safety. As a member of the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, Yukon is helping to develop national mandatory entry-level training standards for commercial drivers. These national standards will help ensure that new drivers have the knowledge and skills to safely operate commercial vehicles in Canada.

Question re: Tourism development strategy

Ms. Van Bibber: Last year, the government released its *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. A key goal in this strategy is to double revenue from tourism. In August, the Minister of Tourism and Culture received the final report of the Yukon tourism development strategy governance task force, which is to provide advice to the government on how to achieve the goal to double revenue.

This report is made up of three very vague recommendations, with no clear indication or explanation on how they will help Yukon double its revenue from tourism. For example, one of the recommendations is simply to rename the Tourism branch of the department. I'm not sure how that will double tourism, but I'm wondering if the minister can explain.

How will renaming the Tourism branch contribute to doubling tourism revenue in the territory?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I just want to first say how proud we are that our government recognizes the value of tourism and is committed to supporting the sustainable growth of this industry.

One of the priority action plans of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* approved by government in February 2019 was to establish a task force to recommend a governance model for tourism. A seven-member task force was formed in March which carefully reviewed extensive research and best practices on tourism governance models and advice from tourism destination management organizations across Canada

to see if an improved governance model could help achieve the goal of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* to increase the alignment between government and industry. That was the task that they had.

Government has reviewed the task force report, and recommendations — including the recommendation to create a made-in-Yukon model incorporating the best of a government department and Crown corporation model — were adopted. I will be happy to continue to talk about this, because it is really important work that was done on behalf of all Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: Another recommendation was simply to make administrative improvements. That might be the most boiler-plate recommendation ever.

Another recommendation was to create a tourism advisory board. This recommendation was an interesting one, as there already existed the strategic marketing advisory council that was funded through Tourism Yukon. The recommendation was the vague government statement “improve processes” and then to replace one advisory board with another advisory board.

Can the minister explain how either of these two recommendations will contribute to doubling tourism revenue in the territory?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will continue on.

The Yukon tourism advisory board was established, and they did a lot of really in-depth work. I want to say how grateful I am to each and every one of them. There were seven representatives: two from the tourism industry, Rich Thompson and Ben Ryan; two members of First Nations, Marilyn Jensen and Michelle Kolla; two from the Yukon government, Valerie Royle and Justin Ferbey; plus an independent chair, Vicki Hancock. These folks within our community — I know that they are not strangers to anyone in this House — in each and every area that they represent, they are stellar, and they did a phenomenal job of really looking at the task that we gave them, which was to look at providing us some recommendations. I will say again that we endorsed the recommendations that they gave. Yes, there were some specific recommendations around administrative changes, around a name change to the department, and a recommended model, which we have endorsed. We are happy to be working toward implementing those recommendations.

Ms. Van Bibber: Again, no explanation for how the recommendations will double tourism revenue.

On January 26, 2018, the Minister of Tourism launched the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. In August of this year, this culminated in the minister receiving a final report from the government’s taskforce. Despite claims of independence from the Liberal Cabinet, it included membership of deputy ministers who serve at the pleasure of the ministers.

The recommendations that came back were underwhelming, Mr. Speaker. They recommended that we rename the branch of government, they recommended that we make administrative improvements, and they recommended that we create a tourism advisory board to replace an existing tourism advisory board.

Can the minister tell us how much taxpayers’ money the Government of Yukon spent to come up with these three recommendations?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do not underestimate the work that this taskforce did. They went through a tremendous amount of material. They reviewed the Department of Tourism and Culture. Yes, they came up with very specific recommendations. I am pleased with the work that they did. There was a tremendous amount of independence. Vicki Hancock was an independent chair of this taskforce, along with representatives from industry and from members of First Nations.

I do not question the work of this taskforce. I think that they did a phenomenal job and we have a very detailed report as a result of that. We’ve endorsed the recommendations that were provided to us. Again, this is working toward implementing the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. This is a 10-year strategy — the first new strategy for the Yukon in regard to tourism in 18 years.

I’m very pleased with the goals that we’ve set out for ourselves and we will continue to work toward implementing those goals.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 60

Clerk: Motion No. 60, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun: THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue the process of updating the legislative regime for animal protection and dog control by introducing amendments to the *Animal Protection Act* in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Hutton: I, like all Yukoners, love my dog. Dog control has been a very serious issue in all our Yukon rural communities for as long as I can remember, and that goes back a day or two, Mr. Speaker. In 2015, the community of Ross River suffered a very tragic event. One of their community members was fatally attacked by feral dogs in the community. The former government Minister of Community Services, Currie Dixon, made no commitment to review this act at the time of that event. I would really like to hear today from the Yukon Party — and not necessarily from the Member for Whitehorse Centre — about whether this is still their view with respect to this specific piece of legislation. We have continued to see tragic events involving dogs in our rural communities occur.

In 2018, the community of Ross River experienced another serious dog attack. In my riding, I have been made aware of several incidents involving dogs at large. There are times when

residents are fearful for their safety. They are scared to let their children play outside or walk to school for fear that there will be dogs roaming the streets. We must work cohesively as a government with residents, with municipalities, and with First Nations to come up with a solution. Communities are frustrated with the limitations of the existing laws and the challenges of enforcing them. Part of this problem needs to be addressed by updating the legislation.

A public survey was conducted last year from October 16 to December 16, and the Department of Environment held 10 meetings in Yukon communities during the months of November and December. Meetings were held in the three larger communities that fall within my riding — Mayo, Pelly Crossing, and Carmacks. Meetings were also held in other communities throughout the territory. The survey portion of engagement had over 900 responses, which I am happy to see. The sheer number of responses to this survey speak volumes about how important this discussion is to Yukoners.

Yukon's current animal protection and control legislative framework is very outdated. The current legislation seriously hinders the ability of our animal control officers to respond to concerns.

This legislative review will examine issues of public safety, animal welfare, and animal control. The results of the engagement will help to create a series of recommendations to improve the existing legislation and its associated regulations.

The animal protection officer receives, on average, 114 complaints annually. The complaints range on issues from dogs running at large, escaped or feral animals, dogs and highway traffic, dogs attacking other animals, dogs that exhibit threatening behaviour to humans, as well as concerns around animal neglect or abandonment.

Historically, due to a lack of access to veterinary care in the communities, what we tend to see are large populations of dogs or dogs that are not spayed or neutered. In 2016, the new community dog spay project and community dog care initiative were launched. The spay fund helps rural Yukon dog owners afford to have their dog spayed, which is the most effective way to prevent growing numbers of dogs.

When we begin to have these large, roaming dog packs in the communities, it becomes a dangerous public safety issue. While the spay fund has helped somewhat to mitigate this issue, we still need to look at other ways to help reduce these challenges and ensure that our legislation and regulations are written in such a way that the government has the ability to intervene more effectively.

I feel strongly that changes to our legislation and regulations around animal protection and dog control will be welcomed by all my constituents. I understand that a second phase of discussions took place during the spring and summer this year on issues that require further discussion, including how changes might affect dog mushers, livestock farmers, and enforcement in communities.

Community enforcement is a really challenging issue on its own. Most of the communities do not have a dog catcher; instead, they rely on a visiting officer. I'm really looking

forward to seeing what comes of this engagement and what thoughts the community has on helping to resolve this issue.

I have had many discussions on this matter with constituents, and they have all expressed to me how challenging it is to find someone in their community to take on the role of dog catcher. The municipalities have taken what steps they are able to when it comes to the control of animals.

The Village of Mayo has had By-law #92, the animal control bylaw, since 1992. I think that, from that time, from 1992 to 2019, there may have been three or four years when they actually had a dog catcher to enforce the bylaw.

In a small community, it is a pretty unpopular job for anyone to take on. It is a real challenge in a small community, as I said, when they are unable to find someone to take on this role.

This is an important time for animal control and protection legislation in the Yukon. I hope that members here today will recognize the value of amending this legislation and its related regulations and will extend their support for this motion.

Mr. Istchenko: I rise to speak to Motion No. 60, as brought forward by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

I am going to be focusing many of my comments around the "what we heard" document released by the government in July of this year on their review of the animal protection and control laws.

For the member opposite, he seems to have this thing about bringing up other members in the House. I was actually the minister in charge of this back in the day, so he should use my name — not someone else's name.

I am also really happy to see that this motion — Motion No. 60 — put forward by the member is actually on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. It sounds like it is very important to him, and it has been three years.

There have been concerns raised by groups of individuals within our opposition — and we are going to be supporting this motion today, by the way. It is a good motion.

Certain aspects of this review did seem to target groups and proposed changes that may, in fact, be detrimental to their ability to make a living, such as dogsled owners — and I will speak a little bit about that.

With respect to animal control, it is reported clearly that people want a requirement for owners to control their animals and take care of their animals — whether they are pets or their livelihood, of course — and that control does not necessarily mean that animals have to be on a leash. We have seen issues related to public safety arise out of animal control issues, specifically with uncontrolled dogs.

Better control of livestock is understandable, as we have heard a number of concerns with respect to potential problems that could arise if certain species were to escape and establish a feral population throughout the Yukon. That happened in my riding.

I am encouraged that the government appears to have a clear understanding that we must work in these discussions with First Nations, municipal governments, and local advisory councils — let me go right to the end here, Mr. Speaker — but

also with the Yukon Outfitters Association, the Fish and Game Association, the backcountry hikers and anglers, Yukon Trappers Association, and our local Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and, of course, all of our renewable resources councils should be key players on this.

As we have seen, different communities face different problems. What works for Marsh Lake might not work as a solution in the member's riding — such as Ross River, for example.

The “what we heard” document goes into detail about feral animals. Something I picked up on — as did a couple of other Yukoners — I want to touch on this, because reports of the types of feral animals that we have here in the Yukon and proposals to deal with them appear to be a bit contradictory. I think this will probably get sorted out. But on the one hand, the government says that we currently have feral populations of cats and horses in the Yukon — cats and horses, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, at the top of the list of next steps, government proposes moving forward to create a legal authority for the Government of Yukon to control feral populations by enabling the potential harvest of feral animals by hunters. I am hoping that there is no intention — that is why I'm bringing it up today for those who are creating this — by government to issue permits for hunters to go out and hunt feral horses or cats. I would also like to know what the government has planned. Perhaps the minister can make sense of these parts of the document — when she gets up and speaks — which suggest that the government may enable the harvest of cats and horses.

The “what we heard” document also outlines the fact that people want a limit to the number of companion animals that can be owned without requiring a permit. I spoke a bit about how this review might target individual groups like dog-sled owners. While animal hoarding is a real issue — I have also seen that in my riding — it cannot be assumed that any individual who owns more than 10 dogs or cats are animal hoarders. Sled dog owners are obviously exceptions, as they may own more than 10 dogs, but cannot be referred to as a hoarder. So, it is encouraging, like I said, that Yukoners are passionate about ensuring the proper care of sled dogs. However, proper care should be an assumed requirement of all species of pets, livestock, and work animals — so that kind of seems to be targeting dog-sled owners. For a large number of them, it is actually their livelihood that is on the line, so would those involved in tourism-related businesses be exempt from this system? That is one of the questions that I have. Why set a higher standard for these dog-sled owners than other dog or animal owners?

If government is going to implement a permitting system on Yukoners for dogs and for animals limiting ownership to five or 10 animals before having to apply for a permit, that kind of begs the question: Who is going to be affected? If the government starts with dogs, then goes to cats, then those with horses, sheep, pigs, ducks, and turkeys — who is going to be affected and where does it stop? This might turn into a bit of a slippery slope, and the animal owners must be aware that these

changes, if implemented, may affect them even if they aren't specifically targeted right away.

No Yukoner on the threshold of permitting limitations should have to beg permission from government to have another animal. If it is decided that the threshold for animal ownership is five, and an individual living on an acreage out of town has three dogs — that's a really good example, Mr. Speaker — and one of his dogs has a litter of four pups, that individual would then have to take the time and spend the money to apply for a permit to be able to keep those puppies or face being in contravention of the *Animal Protection Act*. I don't think that is fair, so hopefully we look at that.

Further, how much will the permitting process cost the government? If government was to follow through on enforcing a permit process for animals, it begs the question: How many staff would have to be hired to deal with enforcement? This is obviously not a small feat. Yukon is quite large. It can be absorbed into the daily duties of the current staff, maybe — I guess that is to be determined.

It might be better for the government to focus spending on supporting humane societies, say, rather than a massive new system of red tape to grow government. If costs were focused on spay and neuter programs in all communities, perhaps there would be fewer issues with animal protection and less stress put on humane societies.

That being said, this government does have a glorious track record in dealing with non-governmental organizations, and we have spoken at length in this House about NGOs, their valuable dedication, their service to our communities, and the increasing problems that they face due to government decisions and treatment. From the look of it, there are current financial issues being experienced by the Humane Society Yukon, and I am just hopeful that the government is taking the opportunity to see what they can do to work with this non-governmental organization to ensure that they can stay on their feet, because it is a very important organization.

There is a history of the government not working so well with them and wanting to take the reins themselves. Government has to change that track record in working with the humane societies — and there are more than just the one here across the Yukon — and see how this could play into this, and see whether the current funding structure is working for all of them and what they can do to assist.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke a little bit earlier about all of the different organizations that, through consultation — I am just curious and want to make sure that, when we go out — if there are further consultations that the government has planned with respect to the potential amendments to the *Animal Protection Act* — that they talk to all of them.

The only other thing that I want to note, I guess, in my final comments is that, like I said earlier, we are going to be supporting this motion, and I just hope — that is why we are in the opposition; we raise concerns — that they are going to be addressed in further comments from other members across the way.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing forward this important issue and motion.

We are currently in the midst of renewing the legislation not only for dogs but for all domestic animals. I want to of course thank the staff — especially those from the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources — who have helped to advance this work.

I also want to thank the public for all of their input into the development of this important legislation thus far. The review has included looking at animal protection and welfare and the control of domestic animals. It is also looking at some gaps in our existing legislation, particularly for managing feral and exotic animals. The focus of the review is to look at how a new legal framework can be enforced effectively in communities. We know we have varied communities — some that are incorporated; some are not — the majority of which have some First Nation influence.

We also know that these are very important issues. These are live issues in many parts of the Yukon. Last fall, we invited every First Nation, every municipality, and every local advisory council to discuss how to better manage domestic animals across the Yukon. A team of officials from the Department of Environment travelled to 10 Yukon communities for public engagements as well as direct meetings with First Nations and municipal governments. Together with officials from the Agriculture branch at the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, we have also been talking directly with the agricultural sector about setting standards for keeping livestock.

We also met with other groups to get perspectives on the issues that affect them. These groups include animal rescues, the RCMP, dog mushers, kennel operators, and veterinarians. We also posted a public survey on engageyukon.ca that asked about key issues and what values should guide animal protection and control in Yukon.

We received more than 900 responses to the survey. With this level of response, it won't surprise anyone that pets and livestock are highly valued by Yukoners. A "what we heard" document is available online — and it was spoken about today — that summarizes the feedback received and the next steps that we'll be taking. I would like to highlight a few things learned from this engagement.

Many Yukoners said that they want animal owners to have control over their animals at all times — not letting animals wander around neighbourhoods freely, for example — and for there to be better tools to enforce animal control in our communities.

Yukoners said that the well-being and interests of animals should be protected and that high standards of care are critical for pets, livestock, and working animals. They said that they want to set standards for the care of animals, and it should apply to many organizations in Yukon that work with animals either as a business or as a non-profit organization.

Furthermore, we heard support for the Yukon government to have legal authority to manage feral animals as well as to take proactive management approaches so that domestic

animals don't become feral and negatively impact the health of wildlife, the integrity of the landscape, and/or public health and safety.

We know that there is more to learn before we can put an effective legal framework in place. While we have heard from many people, we have continued the conversations and our work, in particular, around how to best manage working animals, livestock, and animal organizations.

Our next step is to conclude discussions with First Nation governments, municipalities, and key stakeholders on specifics of how to incorporate the values that we've heard during the engagement — values such as specific standards of care to protect animals from situations of abuse or neglect and to maintain clear prohibitions against abusing animals. This is important to Yukoners.

These legislative processes take time, and the issues are complex. However, the Yukon government is committed to delivering updated and effective animal legislation in order to address these important issues and to ensure that what we propose will work for Yukoners.

Domestic animals from sled dogs to pack horses, from livestock to house pets have been a part of our past and will continue to be a part of our future. They contribute to our diversified economy through tourism and agriculture, and they are critical to keeping Yukoners healthy and active, even if it is just by taking the dog for a walk. If our environment and animals are unhealthy or distressed, there is a risk to the health of our communities and people.

This is an important time for animal control and protection legislation in the Yukon. This is why we want to build a framework that will be enforceable in communities to protect people and animals.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this motion forward. I was in this Legislative Assembly in 2015, and it was awful. It was truly awful what happened to the community of Ross River, especially to that young man's family. So, when we talk about this act, I think it's important to note that it's outdated. I don't think that there's any question about this. I believe that what is being signalled right now from the government side is that, hopefully, we can expect amendments in the 2020 calendar year. I'm looking forward to having those brought forward and to walking through them, as we often do with new pieces of legislation so we can better understand it. I do appreciate that.

I think it's important to note that, at present, the Government of Yukon is responsible for both the protection and the control of domestic animals. The reason why I bring that up is that right now we're seeing — I don't know that this motion could be in a more timely fashion when we have recently seen the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter pretty much saying that they just don't know if they are going to last the calendar year, and they don't know how they're going to move forward.

One of the reasons why I want to bring this up is that, within the *Animal Protection Act*, it does talk about the creation of humane societies and what those requirements are. One of

the things I want to highlight — and I know that it's not popular with the government side, but it's important to note that the last time I was able to find current information about the transfer amount of money between the Yukon government and the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter was for 2014-15. At that point in time, it was included in the budget document, and it was \$80,000 — and it hadn't changed. It had been that way for a number of years. Unfortunately, when I went through the current budget documents, especially since 2017, I couldn't find a number. I don't know if that amount has increased.

One of the reasons why I bring that up is because, in reading more about what's going on at the shelter — so this is just quoting right now — they have a GoFundMe page. You know that things are dire when you turn to the community asking for donations in this way. It says, "The Mae Bachur Animal Shelter in Whitehorse has had a tough year; fundraising events fell short of what we needed, senior staff turned over, and a court case drained resources. We have 10 animals that desperately need vet attention, but we owe thousands in vet bills already. Can you help us?"

"We take in animals from all across the territory. We are 75% funded by fundraisers, donations and animal adoption fees. The animal adoption fees mostly go to pay the vet bills for neutering/spaying and vaccinating them, and don't cover other costs related to feeding, care, and keeping the doors open 5 days a week. We perform an essential service in the North, taking in strays from throughout the Territory. Can you help us pay the vet bills and keep the doors open for the animals?"

The reason why I wanted to read this is that I think it's really important to note that this is one organization — and there are others, of course. There is YARN, the Yukon Animal Rescue Network, which is based out of Watson Lake. We know that there is also an animal rescue located, I believe, on the Atlin Road. The reason why I bring this forward is that, currently, the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter has a budget of over \$400,000, and that means that \$300,000 needs to be raised by this group of dedicated volunteers and people who are passionate about the care and welfare of animals. What we have seen in recent years is that the need in the communities far surpassed the ability of this organization to keep up. When we did make changes to the act before — when we have been talking about it here — one of the things that it did was to also empower the ability to bring in abandoned or unwanted animals from the communities to Whitehorse to the shelter. It's important to note that the shelter under the current legislation is a no-kill shelter, so they do their best to keep the animal healthy and then to adopt it out.

What we have seen are the pressures that happen when those animals — not just from Whitehorse, but from all communities — are brought into town. We know that the Dawson City animal shelter often gets dogs from Inuvik, so it's not that we are just taking care of Yukon animals or abandoned animals, but we are also looking farther into the Northwest Territories.

When you adopt an animal from the animal shelter and you pay that fee — what they are trying to highlight is that it doesn't actually cover the cost of caring for that animal up to that point

or, if it has been there for a while — or how that works with the overhead of keeping the building open and all that is there. They have highlighted that the operating costs have continued to grow, whether we are talking about the cost of pet food, vet fees, utilities, staffing costs, or cleaning supplies — and the list goes on. I think that this is one of those times where — similar to how, unfortunately, in Yukon we believe that recycling is free, although there is a cost to recycle — we also believe that animal care — I'm not sure how we think that it pays for itself, but I don't think the community or the territory — when I say "community", I mean the community at large — understands how that works here.

The reason why I'm bringing this forward right now is that this is a no-kill shelter, so they bring in animals with the intent of keeping them and trying to adopt them out.

They have a really active online presence now where they do what they refer to as "glamour photos" where someone takes a picture of the animal with the name, they do a little writeup, and they try to get them adopted that way.

I think there have been moves in recent years where we talk about the importance of adopting senior pets. It's really easy for a puppy or kitten to get adopted, but it's a lot harder for a nine-year-old cat or a senior dog to get adopted out. I would say, as someone who has two or at least one senior dog at this point in time — he has lots of gumption left in him — that it is something to consider as well.

I think the real crux of the matter right now — as I talk about the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter and as we talk about the *Animal Protection Act* — is that it is the government's responsibility. It says that government is responsible for the protection and control of domestic animals.

If we, as government, have depended on this non-governmental organization to kind of be the "Raven Recycling" of the animal protection world, and they are going through these struggles, what does it mean when they close? What happens if this shelter closes? What do we believe as a society is our responsibility? What do we believe is important? I just want to leave that there because I think this is going to be a conversation that we may have to have in the future — where we feel that our responsibility lies. I would say that it's no fault of an animal that it has been brought in to the world, and like for any being, I think we need to consider a life of respect and one of care.

Under the *Animal Protection Act*, for example, we have section 9(1), which is the "Approval of humane society". It goes through and it talks about how the Commissioner in Executive Council — so, of course, that's government — "... may approve as a humane society for the purposes of this Act any organization having as a principal object the prevention of cruelty to animals..." I'm not going to go through the entire act, although it is interesting reading if anyone likes legislation, but what I would like to put on the record right now is: Where do we believe that government's responsibility lies? Unfortunately, we've seen recently with the dealings with Many Rivers — let's say the new board that then stepped down — that if, as Mae Bachur tries to — I know from something I read that they said they had fallen out of compliance. They were

trying to get back into compliance so, therefore, they didn't get their government transfer funds, which is fascinating because Many Rivers did, but that's another story altogether.

What does it mean if that board steps down and new people step forward? We've seen that the liability is actually going to follow the board no matter what that iteration of the board is.

What I do want to make sure that I put here is: What do we, as Yukon society, believe is our responsibility for animals? What would happen if that shelter closed its doors? At this point in time, we know that the City of Whitehorse municipal pound isn't fully staffed. Their preference is to move animals toward the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter because it is more staffed, peopled, and all those things.

There are a lot of questions. I am looking forward to seeing what the proposed amendments are. I am hopeful that it's going to be spring or sometime in 2020, because as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun said, I think there are changes that need to happen.

Mr. Speaker, right now, I would just like us all to consider what would happen if Mae Bachur closed its doors and what responsibility we have as legislators to that organization or to the work that they do for the territory. Again, I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for the motion.

Speaker: Is there further debate on Motion No. 60? If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Hutton: I would just like to thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly here today for providing their support to this motion. There is no doubt in my mind that dogs are important to all of us. I appreciate the comments from the member of the Third Party. The Mae Bachur society has certainly been on my mind for the last couple of evenings as well. It is a great question that she posed here today, and I am quite happy to close with it as well. What are we going to do if that shelter closes down? Thank you everyone for your support.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 60 agreed to

Motion No. 27

Clerk: Motion No. 27, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House endorses the implementation of the 2018 *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

Mr. Adel: I'm happy to rise today to speak to Motion No. 27. Yukon's last vision for tourism was developed in 2000. Since then, the tourism sector in Yukon has significantly grown and shifted. The Department of Tourism and Culture has been working steadily to lead development of a multi-year, goal-orientated tourism development strategy.

To guide the development of the strategy, a 15-member Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee was developed. It was comprised of organizations that represent the tourism industry, Yukon First Nations, municipalities, the arts and culture community, and the Yukon government, and it was brought together to provide strategic advice to the minister and guide the initiative forward. The committee has completed this work. It has officially endorsed and recommended the strategy to the Yukon government for approval.

Today, I am bringing this motion to the House seeking support from all members to endorse the strategy, *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy — Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future. — 2018-2028*. The YTDS lays out a vision for tourism to be a vibrant, sustainable component of Yukon's economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

The strategy charts a 10-year plan for Yukoners, developed by Yukoners — which I think is a very important thing to remember — to become a leading sustainable tourism destination. Its aim is to support sustainable, diversified growth that balances economic development with environmental, community, and cultural values over the next decade.

Throughout the engagement process, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners expressed a strong desire for sustainable tourism, expressed simply by the United Nations World Tourism Organization as — and I quote: "... tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."

As such, the strategy is guided by eight core values that Yukoners shared through a public engagement process. These values are the foundation of the strategy and underpin the vision

and the strategy's three goals to help Yukon become a leading, sustainable tourism destination.

The values also inform the strategy's four interconnected pillars that outline 24 strategic actions that will be collectively developed and implemented over the next decade to bring the strategy to life.

Seven action plans have been identified by the committee as priorities in the short term. Each of the action plans will be monitored and progress on implementation will be reported to the committee.

There are 17 remaining action plans outlined to be completed over the next 10 years. While the committee did not identify the remaining action plans as a priority, it does not preclude partners from beginning work to advance the action plans. This approach is consistent with the department's support for the strategy within Yukon's current fiscal climate.

I want to outline the many benefits that I see in endorsing the Yukon tourism strategy. While the Yukon tourism sector is doing well, as we have seen demonstrated by the growing figures that the minister presented to this House, the strategy provides the opportunity to take this success to a much higher level.

The Yukon is well-positioned to leverage access to the booming global tourism market. By building greater alignment and collaboration among governments and stakeholders, Yukon can maximize the full potential that tourism offers and become a leading, sustainable tourism destination while doubling revenues.

Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy and currently contributes 4.4 percent of Yukon's GDP, employs 3,500 people, and generates approximately \$250 million in business revenue, making it a strong and sustainable contributor to Yukon's economy while also building healthy and vibrant communities.

In 2016, revenue to Yukon businesses attributable to tourism was \$262.9 million. Doubling this revenue would have us see a target of \$525 million by 2028. A further benefit that I see to endorsing this plan is that the strategy has been endorsed and recommended by the 15-member steering committee made up of tourism industry representatives, First Nations, municipalities, and cultural organizations. Endorsing the full strategy in principle would validate the collective efforts and feedback of Yukoners.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of the steering committee and give folks a picture of how comprehensive and inclusive it was. The committee was comprised of: Rich Thompson, stakeholder and co-chair representing the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Valerie Royle, government co-chair representing the Department of Tourism and Culture; Bev Buckway, representing the Association of Yukon Communities; Brian Stethem, representing the Klondike Visitors Association; Kalin Pallett, representing the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon; Justin Ferbey, representing the Department of Economic Development; Katie Newman, representing the Yukon Historical and Museums Association; Michelle Kolla, representing the Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce; Casey Prescott, representing

the Yukon Arts Centre; Neil Hartling, representing the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon; Garry Umbrich, also representing the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon; Grand Chief Peter Johnston, representing the Council of Yukon First Nations; Daphne Pelletier Vernier, representing the Carcross/Tagish First Nation; Isabelle Salesse, representing Association franco-yukonnaise; Lisa Dewhurst, representing the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association; and last but not least, with support from the Yukon Convention Bureau and Sport Yukon.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, it was an incredibly comprehensive steering committee whose membership represented the voices of a significant number of Yukoners. The steering committee was responsible for the oversight of the department's largest ever public engagement. Further, First Nation chiefs fully endorsed the strategy at the 2018 forum meeting, are particularly supportive of a one-government approach to tourism, and are keen to see the indigenous tourism action plans proceed. Indigenous tourism presents an opportunity to support reconciliation and cultural revitalization.

Yukon First Nations have expressed strong support of strategy pillar 3, Mr. Speaker — vibrant First Nation history and culture, which includes two action plans targeted to providing opportunities for First Nations to share and celebrate their stories in a meaningful and authentic way in a one-government approach to tourism. A strong indigenous tourism sector would expand opportunities for acknowledgement and celebration of First Nations' rich history, culture, and traditions and would facilitate cross-cultural understanding and partnerships.

Many First Nation governments are interested in opportunities for their development corporations, entrepreneurs, and citizens to become involved in the development of sustainable, market-ready and export-ready indigenous experiences by providing First Nations with opportunities to participate in the economy, the development of sustainable indigenous tourism facilities, and reconciliation through the implementation of chapter 22 on economic development and of chapter 13, "Heritage", of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Focusing on priority actions will allow stakeholders to concentrate on their work on the short-term outcomes and to schedule work on the mid-term priorities. It's also fiscally prudent and realistic within Tourism and Culture's capacity. Approval of the strategy in principle acknowledges the significant effort and input by Yukoners that began with the Yukon Tourism Stakeholder Roundtable in July 2017, the Yukon Winter Tourism Summit in December of 2017, a comprehensive 3.5-month public engagement, and the draft strategy review.

The implementation of the strategy will continue to build and strengthen the positive relationships that have been established as partners work together to develop their action plans.

Mr. Speaker, the focus on a one-government approach to tourism provides an opportunity and a prototype testing ground to build a more unified, client-focused model for tourism

industry partners to access government services in a streamlined and efficient manner which could be applied to other government departments and services.

Further, the recent MOU between the Yukon government, Yukon First Nation tourism and culture, and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada aligns the three respective tourism strategies and places Yukon in a unique advantage with the new federal tourism strategy currently in development.

On November 12, 2018, the federal Minister of Small Business and tourism announced the creation of an advisory council to help develop a national tourism strategy for Canada. The initiative is a result of the recognition that there is an opportunity for significant growth that far exceeds the current two percent of Canada's GDP attributable to tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the development of a new federal tourism strategy has the core objective of creating new opportunities and jobs for the middle class in the tourism sector across Canada. Yukon is well-positioned to align with Canada's vision for tourism and showcase our spectacular landscapes, attractions, unique culture, and people. The *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* supports Canada's vision for growth while differentiating Yukon as an internationally competitive destination.

Now I would like to speak a bit about the economics of tourism. Tourism is responsible for 10 percent of the world's GDP and grew faster than the global economy as a whole in 2016. It's one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors, with more than 1.2 billion people travelling for tourism in 2016. Mr. Speaker, globally, the industry is valued at over \$2 trillion Canadian dollars. As I outlined earlier, in Yukon, 4.4 percent of Yukon's GDP is attributable to tourism and the Yukon leads Canada as the jurisdiction with the highest percentage of total jobs in tourism.

Tourism in the Yukon generates revenue for a wide variety of businesses, both directly and indirectly, through a trickle-down effect. In 2016, visitors to Yukon spent \$303 million — an increase of 6.7 percent over 2015. Visitor spending has grown by a healthy 131.3 percent over the past five years.

Mr. Speaker, with over one in 10 Yukoners directly employed in the tourism sector, a growing tourism industry means higher employment, more disposable income, and the development and enhancement of local facilities and infrastructure. These statistics clearly demonstrate that tourism is one of the key drivers of our economy on a global scale. I'm proud of this strategy and the way it was developed, and I think the engagement level undertaken and the feedback received from Yukoners speaks volumes. It gives us a clear path forward.

I would like to wrap up my remarks for now, but I would also like to thank the minister and her department for the hard work and all the other groups that contributed to this strategy. I'm looking forward to hearing from other members today with their thoughts on this strategy and engagement process.

Ms. Van Bibber: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Motion No. 27, brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt North.

I'll start by saying that the Official Opposition is certainly supportive of finding better ways to increase and enhance tourism in the territory. We too want to ensure a steady flow of visitors and that the tourism private sector is able to thrive sustainably year-round.

I just have a few questions about the strategy and the next step of its implementation. One of the main pillars within this strategy notes that a number of actions must be taken for the Yukon to realize its full potential as a sustainable, year-round tourism destination. Mr. Speaker, we agree on that.

One of the things we have yet to receive from this government is clear, tangible information on what they, as a government, are doing to increase tourism opportunities within the territory. It is great to see significant involvement from the industry in the development of this strategy — and thank you to the public servants who contributed to it. But at the end of the day, it is the minister and the Liberal government who are responsible for making the final decisions on what is and isn't a priority for the territory.

The strategy document notes that a stronger governance model, infrastructure to improve access to and around the territory, and effective decision-making will be what leads to achieving the full potential of year-round tourism. So, we would like to hear a few more details about this.

Can the minister outline exactly what will be changing in the governance model to make it stronger? Are the key decision-makers changing? Will the role of Government of Yukon be different going forward? Will services or responsibilities be shifted toward the private sector, industry associations, or tourism boards? Will Tourism and Culture staff be relocated or reassigned to support the stronger governance model?

The creation of new advisory panels, committees, subcommittees, and a task force may seem like good announcements, but there are so many being created for duplicate purposes that it's nearly impossible to keep track of what is happening. Based on some of the answers the government gives during Question Period, it seems we're having a hard time keeping track.

Moving on — what specific infrastructure has the department targeted to achieve its goals to reach Yukon's full potential for tourism? The strategy mentions roads in communities, so which ones will this strategy address first in its implementation? We know that the government has chosen to invest significantly in the north Klondike Highway, but we also know that it's not the only important roadway with which repairs could improve tourism. We have noted on multiple occasions that maintenance of the north Alaska Highway plays a role in tourism from across the border, but the government hasn't even blinked an eye at this suggestion.

Speaking of communities — perhaps the minister can let us know whether community infrastructure includes the replacement of the visitor information centres that need it — for example, Watson Lake. We raised the issues of the Watson Lake VIC numerous times, wondering what steps the minister has taken to replace the centre. There needs to be a permanent solution, and after asking the same questions of the minister

over numerous legislative Sittings, it is time we have a firm commitment to fixing this issue.

I think we can all agree that the key element to achieving the full potential of tourism would be to ensure that all communities have accessible information about tourism opportunities within each area. So, overall, I think Yukoners deserve to know which communities are going to be given a priority once the strategy is implemented.

The strategy also mentions airport facilities as an area for improvement. We know that many of our local airlines provide services across the territory for the purpose of tourism, so we would like to hear what and where the government's plans are in terms of which facilities will be prioritized next.

The government committed to spend \$5 million this year on the Mayo aerodrome and it was recently certified as an airport by Transport Canada. It would be nice to hear a tourism perspective regarding that \$5-million investment and whether it will enhance the tourism opportunities in the Mayo area.

It would also be nice to finally get an answer from the government as to why they are lapsing a significant portion of the money that they originally budgeted for the Mayo aerodrome. What will the impacts of lapsing this funding be on this tourism sector?

Mr. Speaker, it is the minister in this government who is responsible for making the final decisions.

Earlier this summer, CBC reported that Skagway was preparing itself for a million cruise ship passengers to arrive over the summer season. At the time, we noted that this market represents a huge opportunity for the Yukon tourism industry and the private sector economy and that it is still a market that the Government of Yukon should be actively courting. In response, the government was clear that it was not a market that they were actively promoting. So, the Liberals were leaving a million tourists on Yukon's doorstep.

Hopefully, they have changed their perspective on this idea.

I think that in light of the goals outlined by the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, the government should look into tapping into every opportunity to grow. If the goal is to help Yukon realize its full potential as a year-round tourism destination, one would assume that no stone would be left unturned when it comes to creating this environment for potential.

As a closing note, the strategy has almost 40 pages of beautiful pictures and bright infographics, but not a lot of clear takeaways as to where the government's priorities lie. It outlines a lot of goals and objectives, but not a lot of tangibles on how the government intends to achieve them.

We will be looking to the minister to take that responsibility and fill those information gaps for us.

We look forward to hearing exactly how the government will be accomplishing the goals through the implementation of the strategy, when these goals will be accomplished, and how much of the government budget will be set aside for this — including what portion of the government's capital budget will go toward infrastructure intended to improve tourism.

That said, we will be supporting today's motion.

Mr. Gallina: I'm happy to rise today to speak to Motion No. 27 as presented by the Member for Copperbelt North.

As my colleague had mentioned, this new tourism strategy charts a 10-year plan for Yukoners, developed by Yukoners. Today I will focus my comments on the vision of the steering committee in the collaborative development process that gave this strategy shape and definition.

The development of the strategy was guided by a steering committee made up of 17 individuals representing 15 organizations. Mr. Speaker, as I have begun to unpack the vision of this steering committee, it was evident to me that they recognized that sustainable growth of tourism in Yukon will only be accomplished through greater alignment and collaboration among all tourism partners.

The direction to the steering committee for this vision was clear and concise, which I believe contributes to the effectiveness of this strategy. This was to develop a strategy for the Yukon with a vision for tourism in which all Yukoners could see themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this is a powerful statement. It's powerful because it sets a clear path to connect with those who will benefit from it most. It's a strategy that can be embraced. It can be embraced because Yukoners have a deep connection to it and they can see how they fit into this strategy and what it means to them.

As mentioned, the steering committee oversaw the Department of Tourism's largest ever public engagement. The strategy was informed by extensive Yukon-wide engagements that generated over 12,000 comments from 55 engagement sessions held across the territory, 10 written stakeholder submissions, and 115 online surveys, as well as by an internal Yukon government working group and research on best practices from leading destinations. This included community engagement and online platforms connecting with tourism stakeholders, Yukon First Nation governments and citizens, the arts and cultural communities, and the general public. Mr. Speaker, I have outlined some of the work of the steering committee and how that work has influenced the strategy we have today.

Now I would like to spend some time talking about the collaborative approach the steering committee took and why this approach was so effective in capturing how Yukoners see themselves in tourism and how they want to be represented. Mr. Speaker, collaboration recognizes that power is greatest in the collective team. It allows solutions to develop from the best ideas of the group and take a team approach in solving problems. Collaboration employs open information sharing. This is the cornerstone of collaborative success. Sharing information across the collective team and those participating creates more opportunities to develop and implement creative solutions and creative ideas. This is evident in the goals, the core values, and the pillars for success in this tourism strategy.

Effective collaboration gives everyone on the team a voice and, Mr. Speaker, we see this in how the tourism strategy captures the voices of all members of the steering committee. A collaborative environment is based on trust in which teams

are encouraged to work together — information, resources, knowledge, time, and efforts are shared. This allows ideas and positions to evolve and fluctuate based on the greater good of the team and no one individual.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this strategy has progressive bold ideas and has been praised by industry stakeholders within the territory and across the country. I believe that the success on how this strategy was developed is attributable to the thorough, collaborative approach that the steering committee employed.

The steering committee embraced sustainability and aligned with leaders in the field who are bringing about progressive change. Sustainability was focused on providing visitors with reasons to stay longer and spend more rather than increasing visitation at all costs.

As my colleague has mentioned, endorsing this strategy in full would validate the collective efforts and feedback by Yukoners. There were many values identified through the engagement process and it was clear that Yukoners are very proud to call the territory “home”.

We value wilderness, our vibrant communities, and our way of life. Yukoners value heritage as well as our cultural diversity. As a Yukoner, these are certainly values that I share.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 27. I wish to thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing this motion forward. This motion brings a monumental undertaking from the Department of Tourism and Culture. It’s really wonderful to speak to it today.

In 2017, the department embarked on the development of a multi-year, goal-oriented strategy to sustainably grow tourism in Yukon.

Tourism is recognized — we have spoken about it a bit here today — as a major economic contributor to Yukon’s economy, and by all accounts, tourism has been performing well. More than four percent of our gross domestic product is attributable to tourism, which is the second highest percentage among Canadian jurisdictions, only second to PEI. Tourism is also our second largest industry and our largest private sector employer. Almost 14 percent of Yukoners are employed by the tourism sector, which is the highest percentage among Canadian jurisdictions. We aim to keep it up at that level, Mr. Speaker.

As recently released results from the Yukon visitor exit survey show, the collective efforts of Yukon tourism operators, industry partners, and the Department of Tourism and Culture are paying off. Since the last survey of 2012-13, we have seen a 25-percent increase in visitors to Yukon and a 37-percent increase in visitor spending.

As you can see, the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* was not about solving a problem with the sector; rather, it was about maximizing the opportunities that tourism provides. More than simply updating what was already there, we wanted to really seize the opportunity to redefine what a tourism strategy can do and who it represents. It was clear that, to fully realize Yukon’s tourism potential, our strategy needed to be based on collaboration, as you heard my colleague speak about

today — an alignment with stakeholders. That would only be achieved through that comprehensive type of engagement.

We believe that everyone has a role to play in the development of a successful tourism industry, so I tasked the department with developing not a Yukon government strategy, but for sure, what I really was after was a strategy for Yukon — a strategy and a vision that every Yukoner could see themselves in.

To ensure that we have the necessary collaboration and alignment of our key tourism stakeholders, a steering committee was established to provide advice and recommendations on the development of the strategy. The steering committee, as you have heard, was made up of 15 stakeholders representing the tourism industry, Yukon First Nations, the arts and culture community, and the Yukon government. Again, when we put this all together, we wanted to ensure that we had all the stakeholders in the room speaking about the development of tourism and the advancement of tourism in our territory. I wanted to ensure that we were but one partner, and that is what we achieved.

The committee went on to oversee the largest public engagement process ever taken by the Department of Tourism and Culture. I won’t go through those numbers; you have heard them several times.

I’m absolutely proud of the type of engagement that we had from Yukoners. I know, as a lifetime Yukoner born and raised, that when I look at the values and what was achieved through this, I could see myself in it. The values that were identified are my values as a Yukoner. I feel that, from my perspective and from others’ perspectives — because I asked everyone: “If you read the tourism strategy and you think we’re off point, tell us because it’s really important that we get this right.”

The strategy’s collective vision is for tourism to be sustainable, a vibrant component of Yukon’s economy and society for the benefit of future generations. We heard from Yukoners, and we’ve instilled into the strategy three goals, eight core values, and four pillars to emphasize a balance between economy, community life, and the environment. We are the only jurisdiction that identified indigenous tourism development as a key pillar in our strategy. When I talk about economy, community life, and environment, this is also foundational to truth and reconciliation in our territory. This is where we will see culture revitalized and languages revitalized, and what we are hoping and what we know that we’ll see through this is Yukon First Nation culture revitalization and then telling the story through their own voice and their own lens.

From these goals, values, and pillars came 24 action plans. I’m proud to say that we allocated funding this year to begin implementing seven of the 24 strategic action plans. These include establishing a task force to recommend an improved governance model for tourism, which we talked about today in Question Period. That work is done. I’m proud of the work that this task force was able to achieve: adopting a one-government approach to tourism; developing a framework that measures the sustainability of tourism development; establishing Yukon as a

premier destination for indigenous tourism experiences; improving signage; marketing Yukon as a year-round destination; and supporting industry access to a skilled and experienced workforce.

We in Yukon government are working to develop a one-government approach to tourism. Within government, all departments touch on or support the tourism industry or visitors' experiences. For example, my colleague in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has overseen the Peel land use plan, containing within it opportunities for sustainable, eco-friendly tourism offerings. EMR also oversees the Agriculture branch. New growth in agriculture will feed into the culinary tourism sector and provide opportunities for agri-tourism experiences.

My colleagues in Highways and Public Works recently undertook paving the Dawson runway, opening up that region of our territory for year-round visitors. Highways and Public Works is also planning \$157 million worth of upgrades to the north Klondike Highway, which will provide a better driving experience for our visitors. Highways and Public Works has developed a new tourism-oriented, directional signage policy, which has been shared and discussed with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee.

Environment has held public engagements and worked on campground regulations and on developing a Yukon parks strategy. Campgrounds and parks are essential visitor infrastructure.

In Education, the transition to Yukon University provides opportunities for tourism sector educational programs to grow the industry's workforce right here at home. Education also offers a suite of labour market programs to help the tourism industry with employee recruitment, retention, and training. These are just a few recent examples of many ways that our government departments either support, regulate, or serve the tourism industry.

To take action on our commitment to review Yukon's model of Yukon's tourism governance, we formed a task force last March. The mandate of the task force was to assess potential tourism governance models based on their ability to achieve the vision, goals, and values of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. The task force presented their report to government on August 29. In the report, they made three recommendations.

I know that there was a question — and I realize, as I'm going through my presentation, that I didn't answer it today in Question Period — about the cost of the task force. We had allocated \$50,000 for this work of the task force, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the recommendations, the first was to "Enhance Yukon's current governance model by establishing a Cabinet-appointed body of tourism representatives to advise the Minister of Tourism and Culture" — on the ongoing implementation of the strategy. The second was to "Rename the Tourism branch, Department of Tourism and Culture to better reflect its role and profile as a destination management organization." The third was to "Make administrative improvements in the department to enhance flexibility,

responsiveness and efficiency while maintaining accountability."

In October, our government accepted the task force recommendations to establish a new advisory body, the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board — YTAB. This will establish a formal channel through which a board of qualified Yukoners will advise the government on the implementation of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. This made-in-Yukon governance model supports increased collaboration and alignment between government, the private sector, and other tourism industry stakeholders.

Members of this advisory board will be solicited through the Government of Yukon's boards and committees appointment process, with an effective date of April 1, 2020. Renaming the Tourism branch and review of administrative processes will occur over the coming months.

With respect to indigenous tourism, we are working closely with the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. Just under a year ago, we signed a tripartite MOU with these two organizations, committing to work to establish Yukon as a premier destination for indigenous tourism experiences. This summer, we entered into a contribution agreement with the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association to provide this organization with \$300,000, to be matched, dollar for dollar, with funding from CanNor. This funding reflects our strong commitment to supporting progress in this area and will enable the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association to move forward with their 10-year indigenous tourism strategy, which essentially builds the pillar within the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

We talked today about visitor perceptions. In addition to moving forward on the seven priority action plans and the strategy, we are also putting in place the foundation for measuring progress toward achieving the strategic goals. One of these goals is to ensure that at least 80 percent of Yukoners have a positive attitude toward tourism. As we talked about today, the inaugural Yukon resident perception survey is now complete, and we have those results.

The survey, which was conducted from mid-July to September, asked Yukoners about their perception on whether tourism is good for Yukon overall, whether it's good for their community, whether it benefits the economy, and whether they feel it contributes positively to Yukoners' quality of life, among other questions.

I'm proud to say — of course we talked about it today — the initial results were very good results. Ninety-four percent of Yukoners feel that tourism is good for Yukon and 89 percent believe that tourism is good for their community.

However, the really important point to make here is that we have established a baseline for data that will allow us to measure and be held accountable for how we implement the strategy going forward.

We will now administer this survey every two years. If satisfaction levels remain, that of course is great and we will continue to do what we are doing. But if they drop, then we will ensure that we're doing further research and look into why

those levels are dropping. It allows us to monitor as we go forward.

This is at the heart of ensuring that tourism in Yukon is sustainable. If Yukoners are concerned, we want to know that. If tourism is developing in such a way that it is interfering with the quality of life of Yukon, then we must take action. Tourism can only succeed if Yukoners are engaged and supportive. This is also at the heart of evidence-based decision-making, which is a hallmark for the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

I'm just going to go back and have a look at some of the questions that were raised throughout the debate.

I would like to just speak a little bit about some of the questions that were raised today — I think I spoke to a lot of them — around infrastructure, airports, signage — in terms of a one-government approach and our commitments to communities. We certainly engaged very extensively with our communities throughout Yukon to look at what their priorities are. We will work with various regions around the development of tourism plans for various regions throughout Yukon.

For instance, I've spent a lot of time in the Kluane area over the last six months. We've spent time in Watson Lake. We know that there's an outstanding issue with the visitor information centre and the community is working closely together to come up with strategies to rectify the issues that are within their communities. Government again — we see ourselves as one of the partners. I did hear the member opposite say that it's only up to government to set the priorities for tourism. That is not how we see this. We have committed to working in partnership and in collaboration with all of our stakeholders. That is in fact what we are doing. We are working in a new way in terms of developing tourism in our territory.

I see that I'm coming down to the end of my time today to speak to this motion. I want to again thank the member for bringing this forward. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about tourism at any opportunity. With the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* as a road map, Yukon's appeal as a sustainable, year-round, world-class travel destination offering transformational experiences for visitors will continue to grow. By moving forward with these and other initiatives by government and our stakeholder partners, tourism will continue to provide Yukon with sustainable, diversified growth — growth that balances economic development, environment, community, and cultural values.

As we showcase the stunning natural beauty and extraordinary heritage of our special corner of the world, we are committed to keeping our territory and our citizens healthy and prosperous. Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this important motion. If I haven't answered all of the questions that were posed to me, I am happy to have conversations with the members opposite to ensure that they have all of the answers that they're looking for here.

There is actually one more question. In terms of the one million visitors to Skagway — I think that when you look at our tourism strategy, Mr. Speaker, you will see that one of our overarching goals is to double revenue from tourism, not necessarily visitors. We do see the Skagway market as an important one. It sustains a lot of businesses within Yukon, but

one of our overarching goals is to double revenue. Based on our last visitor exit survey, we know that we're on the right track for that when we have seen a 37-percent increase in visitor spending and the lower amount of a 25-percent increase in visitors. We think we're on the right track. It fits with Yukoners' values.

Thank you very much for allowing me the time to speak.

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 27 — that this House endorse the implementation of the 2018 *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

I just want to say at the outset that I'm not quite sure, in putting this motion forward, whether the member intended that we should be endorsing the 2018-2028 Yukon tourism strategy and/or encouraging the government to implement that strategy. We're happy to do both. We think that it doesn't do much to have a strategy unless you actually take sincere and active measures to implement said strategy.

One of the things that's attractive about having a 10-year strategy is that, in committing to do this, the lifespan of a strategy that's 10 years will naturally span the life of more than one government, possibly three, so that commitments being made by this Legislative Assembly on behalf of Yukoners need to resonate and address the issues that Yukon citizens at large, in addition to whatever government of the day, have identified.

To a large extent — and having attended, over the course of the last eight or nine years, most, if not all, of the Tourism Industry Association annual general meetings — there are many aspects of what we see in the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* that resonate. As the minister and the Member for Copperbelt North indicated, many of those same people who have been involved integrally in various aspects of Yukon's tourism industry have been involved in the development of both the strategy and the articulation of some of the core values that should embed any strategy and any operationalization of that strategy.

The key, of course, to any strategic approach or to any strategy is that, when you take it from the lofty language of the vision, the goals, and the values and then you start saying, "Who, what, where, when, how, and how much?" — I will speak a little bit to some of those in a moment.

Mr. Speaker, members preceding me have spoken to the goals of the strategy. Inherent in each of those goals, there are a number of questions. I think that one of the key ones — and it completely underpins all of the core values that are there — is the notion of sustainability. I think we really need to speak about this sustainability in the Yukon context. It is with that in mind that I raised the questions and the concerns that I had raised earlier today with respect to the survey.

It has become more and more clear that, across the globe, it doesn't matter if you have trillions of dollars spent on tourism or if you have increased the number of tourists coming to your place, it could be the worst disaster for a jurisdiction — the absolute worst disaster. This morning, we heard about Venice flooding. The floods are the result of a number of factors, but one of the other challenges that Venice faces is not just the flooding by water, but the flooding by tourists to the point that

Venice is no longer liveable for the citizens of that jurisdiction. That is a concrete example of what happens when there is no constraint or thought given to what sustainability means. It is a real example.

We are thrilled — absolutely thrilled — to see the emphasis on indigenous tourism and all aspects of that and the remarkable growth if you think back to 2007 when the Canada Winter Games were here and how the organizing committee of that Canada-wide event were challenged in terms of getting a significant First Nation cultural presence. From that seed, we have seen remarkable growth and resiliency — and I would say an explosion — of the First Nation Culture and Tourism Association, the Dakwakada Dancers, and all sorts of things that have become renowned.

At the same time, I am reminded — if you go back 20 years and you went to Uluru —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Called Ayers Rock at the time, that's true, as my colleague just pointed out.

But in terms of indigenous tourism all around the base of Ayers Rock, or Uluru, it's owned by the indigenous people of that area. There were tourism shops and tourism cultural events going on, but that sacred site was being inundated and disrespected to the point that it took until this year to see the banning of the climbing of Uluru.

There is a challenge when we talk about sustainability. That's why we say that we support the implementation of this, but that means ever-greening it. It means coming back and saying, "This is what we're doing and this is where we see the red lights. These are the challenges that we're facing."

One of the important aspects of this also is resident support for tourism. Resident support means that people need to feel that not only does it resonate with them, but if they are being affected by tourism or if there are opportunities for them, those opportunities are somehow not inadvertently denied them.

I point out sort of a catch-22 in a way. In this Legislative Assembly a few years ago, we raised a lot of questions to the previous government about their lacklustre response to the potential that existed in Carcross and the strong representations made by representatives of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation development corporation about the importance of developing infrastructure — because without essential infrastructure — and I'm talking about pretty basic infrastructure like water and sewer so that, when tourists came there, they could use washrooms — infrastructure that included a place to stop, to stay, to eat.

If you do that, you begin to get a sense of opportunity and people see potential. Then you have a challenge when you get people seizing that and they say, "Okay, fine. I'll invest, and I'll get my little business in there, and I'll put in whatever it takes to run that business." Then suddenly, they are blindsided because the main tour operators that are engaged with the Government of Yukon and others stop for 15 minutes — not enough time to get from the bus to the shops in the back.

So, how do we work in collaboration — because I've heard a lot about the word "collaboration" again this afternoon — how does that manifest? How do we manifest collaboration

with those major partners to get them to stop and stay for more than 15 minutes? Because it doesn't matter if that bus goes zooming by on the brand new road there — if that is the intention, that doesn't speak well to the one-road, one-government approach, in terms of sensitivity to the local community's needs — which is to have people linger a bit, maybe spend a bit, drink a cup of coffee and listen to Kevin Barr play music in the Carcross Commons, as he does three days a week. I don't know how he does it, but he does.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: I have got to keep the boy sort of fed, you know.

So, that sustainability issue, I think, in my view, is one of the critical linchpins to this whole strategy that the Member for Copperbelt North and the minister have outlined — absolutely critical. I am so pleased to see sort of the evolution in the kinds of presentations that the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon has fostered over the last couple of years. There has been an increased emphasis on this notion of managing capacity to avoid "over-tourism" and the creation of meaningful what we call "off-season tourism" or "shoulder season tourism".

The whole importance of seizing the opportunities for ensuring that, when we do tourism, as I said, that celebrates culture, that we are mindful that it can be too much of a good thing — and how do we manage that? Anybody who has been to any variety of UNESCO World Heritage Sites has seen the examples of too many people inundating something that was incredibly valuable and meaningful to the local culture, but that can't cope with too many of us travelling about. Also, what is acceptable and how much are we prepared to change our infrastructure? How much are we prepared to change the nature of Yukon to accommodate tourism demands? That was the essence and the core of the whole discussion that was a key component of the tourism conference this fall — and the importance of looking at that not just from sustainability — can we hold on, or can we accommodate it — but what are the full impacts? There's a whole need for us to be looking at our tourism strategy.

I was pleased to hear the minister willing to take this one-government approach because it's not simply — it's the full-cost accounting of tourism in the territory and that has an environmental cost associated with it; it has a sustainability cost.

Those ones are going to be — "are", in our view — as I referenced earlier, the authority that the industry had brought up — Megan Epler Wood talked about managing the invisible burden of tourism. Tourism is great, but it has these invisible aspects that we don't see and it does stretch through the economy.

There are a number of other factors. In terms of the local residents' support for tourism — it's ensuring "Loving Yukon" and "Preserving and enjoying our natural environment". I'll just quote here from the strategy: "Our natural environment must be effectively managed so that visitors and residents can explore our wild and dynamic landscapes without detracting

from them or impacting wildlife habitat. Our wilderness is our strength and a fundamental part of who we are.”

We may need to make decisions, Mr. Speaker. When we have small tourism businesses — because many, many tourism operators in the Yukon are not Holland America and they’re not the big hotel owners. They’re the small businesses that run a bed and breakfast with one or two rooms. They’re the small operators who run a small expediting company. They count on their environment looking like the Yukon that people expect. They don’t expect to see — and I’ll use this example again, but the notion that Highways and Public Works — to the extent that it’s contributing to tourism or not — and some people may find it amusing, but do all roads in the Yukon need to be cleared — right away, clearing — to the same extent as the major highways? Do secondary roads that people choose — there’s a terminology when you’re travelling — people choose to take the blue highways. It’s not the major thoroughfares throughout North America. I choose to travel the blue highways because, on the maps, they’re marked in blue because they’re not all paved and all fancy cleared. I get to see what the real country is and what people’s real-life experience is. That’s what I’m looking for as a tourist, and I believe that many tourists are.

So, the notion that we have to clear-cut 65 feet from the centreline on every road in the Yukon — I begin to wonder what that’s going to look like when we get to Fox Lake where there are many bed and breakfasts and other private accommodations along there that cater to tourists.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many aspects to that. When we look at Energy, Mines and Resources and the assurance that land use planning isn’t just a theory, but is actually happening — and not happening with respect to just dealing with one sector of the economy, but looking at the implications for all sectors, including tourism. So, when we are talking about regional land use plans that will somehow roll into the land use plans that we anticipated in the final agreements, where does tourism factor into that? Where are tourism opportunities? Are they articulated? Those are going to be one of the challenges that we anticipate from the implementation of aspects of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. We think the challenges are worth meeting, because our tourism sector, as we have said for many years, has incredible potential if we work together to manage it properly.

We will say this yet again: The demonstration of a government’s commitment to a sector is their willingness to invest in it. I would just urge all members of this House to look at the tourism budget. The tourism budget, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, is kind of static. Immediately after this government came into effect, the budget went down by \$500,000. Now it is slowly incrementally increased, but if we look at it over time, it has pretty much flatlined. I would suggest, as we say to the private sector, to put your money where your mouth is. Perhaps the government needs to reflect, too, on how much it is willing to invest in tourism. I am talking about the rollup number. On capital for tourism, it is kind of moribund — and I am taking these numbers and my assessment from the Public Accounts over the last five years.

I will leave that there. I think that we would encourage the government, as much as it takes, to work with officials who have been charged by the minister and officials across government.

We will be looking to see how the activities of Community Services, Highways and Public Works, and Energy, Mines and Resources positively impact the success of this *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, because that will determine whether or not Yukon has been successful in developing a strategy that will live beyond 2028 in a good way.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 27? If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Adel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the members from across the way from the Yukon Party and the Third Party for their thoughtful remarks and their challenging questions. All of those will help us move forward.

In response to the member from the Third Party, in the motion, it is that we endorse the implementation of the strategy, which, moving forward, is what I think they were asking for.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee — the 17 of them who worked very hard on this. Every journey starts with one step. We now have a road map that the community and the department have put together. Working together with a one-government approach, we can maybe meet these challenges that have been brought forward by members from across the way and make the Yukon the destination and the place we want it to be.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 27 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 200: *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-10*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Silver has 18 minutes and 19 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will allow my colleague across the way to ask some more questions.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I just want to go back — I know, last time, we chatted about campgrounds and about the fee increases. I just want to get a bit more of a definite answer from the Premier. It looks like they were looking — one of the recommendations was to charge seniors, and those are seniors who get a free hunting licence and, right now, a free camping permit — \$100. Is this something the government is thinking about doing?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do know that senior fees were part of the consultation that was underway. Again, in general, we are proposing new payment options and increases to fees for camping at territorial park campgrounds. These efforts are part of our response to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's recommendations in their report and also our work to set a strategy for the future of Yukon parks systems.

The proposed new fees will better help us to sustain park services and to improve convenience and efficiency and also maintain affordable access while still retaining some of the

lowest camping fees in Canada — extremely important. Right now, it's still in the proposal stage and so there are certain things that are being proposed, including either a discount for seniors on an annual pass or other considerations.

Again, that public engagement on the draft strategy did close on September 29, and we are now preparing a "what we heard" document and will be incorporating feedback into a final strategy. Those proposed changes should be coming into effect in 2021, but again, we are at that stage of collecting the data and moving on with a "what we heard" document. That's where we are currently.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to apologize for not welcoming the staff here again today. I know that you are in here lots lately for some reason, but anyway, thanks for coming again.

I thank the Premier for that. In the survey, there is also mention — and we touched on this a little bit — of creating a new campground in the vicinity of Whitehorse. Can the Premier please provide a bit more information about where this campground will be located? How many sites will it offer, and will it be lakefront or by a river? Does the Premier have any information on that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: There is nothing new to report today. You can imagine that something like that would be something that the department would be on. If there was something, they would have an opportunity to do a communications dialogue if they were prepared today to give any new information.

It is worth noting that the government maintains 42 campgrounds with more than 1,000 campsites, 12 recreation sites, and six territorial parks — for example, Tombstone in the beautiful Klondike — where people can connect with nature. Nearly 89,000 Yukoners and visitors camped in the government campsites in 2018, which was an increase of 17 percent from the previous year.

As we take a look at these pressures and we take a look at the ability of Yukoners and tourists to get out on the land, it is imperative that we keep up with that demand. In 2018, we did mark a record year, welcoming nearly 27,000 people to the centre and 19 more visitors than in 2017 as well.

Speaking directly about investing in camping, as the demand for clean, safe, and quiet camping continues to grow, so does our investment to care for our campgrounds and our parks.

Again, Tombstone Park and the world-class interpretive centre there is an extremely important investment. In 2019, we continued our investment in upgrading and our investment in maintenance and also the staffing of our campsites to ensure that they continue to be safe and enjoyable for all Yukoners, visitors — and the environment.

We have so many campsites that are so readily available from whatever city or town you live in. It's something that I appreciate myself. If I have the opportunity on a day's notice to have some time, you can usually find me at a campsite somewhere in the Yukon. I have my favourites. I'm sure the member opposite has his own favourite in his riding. He has some beautiful parks in that beautiful riding. But, again, it's really important that we continue with that investment.

In the 2019 season, we are investing \$833,000 for improvements including: a total of 11 additional campsites at the Little Salmon Lake and Five Mile Lake campgrounds; replacement of the Wolf Creek bridge; playground replacements; roofs replaced on kitchen shelters, which are extremely well-used in our campsites; rusty outhouse barrels are being replaced with fibreglass tanks; bear-proof garbage cans are being replaced as well; additional bear-proof storage bins are installed; docks and roads are upgraded and repaired; new information kiosks and signs installed; and hundreds of hazardous trees are being removed.

The strategy could indicate a process to identify a location for the Whitehorse-area campground. That is kind of where we are right now. We have shared a draft Yukon parks strategy this fall for comment, and we will be incorporating feedback on the final strategy this winter.

Again, it's a great opportunity to thank everybody who participated so far in the engagements on parks and campgrounds. It's clear that it is an extremely popular subject matter with Yukoners.

As the demand and the expectations continue to grow and to evolve, it's a good time to take a long-term and strategic look at our system of territorial parks and campgrounds in Yukon. Specific proposed actions would include the building of a new campground — as the member opposite mentioned — in the Whitehorse area, testing a reservation system for select sites in campgrounds, updating fees, and also encouraging more year-round use of parks and campgrounds.

So, again, there is nothing specific as far as the location, but that would come out of the strategy. The Yukon parks strategy and the good work there is where we will be identifying a location for that Whitehorse-area campground.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. The Premier was talking about upgrades and improvements being made to existing campgrounds and campsites. He did list a few that were happening, and that was good to hear. I want to talk a little bit about docks when it comes to campgrounds. I know there are quite a few campgrounds that have older docks that need replacement — good old Mother Nature and wind usually have something to do with that. I know that the dock that had been put in place this year — and it just got pulled out — for the cottage lots on Kluane Lake was a pretty nice dock.

Constituents from all around the Yukon are just wondering if there is money in the budget for upgrades to some of the other docks at some of the other campgrounds.

Hon. Mr. Silver: This would be work that would come out of the strategy, and that draft strategy is a 10-year plan. It does have eight different priorities in it. "Keep doing what's working" is one of the main pieces, and so if you are seeing success in a particular campsite — either the way that it is structured or the assets that are there — it is extremely important to make sure that we continue to provide those things; developing a plan for the parks system, as well; establishing and operating emerging new parks; enriching and diversifying those park experiences; ensuring protection; advancing reconciliation; modernizing regulations; and also financially sustaining our parks.

Again, as the good work is being done on the strategy, it is extremely important to know that these are the guiding pillars for that 10-year process.

As I mentioned, in 2019, we invested \$833,000 to expand and improve campsites. For example, Little Salmon Lake campground was expanded by seven campsites, Twin Lakes campground by five, and bridges were replaced at Wolf Creek campground. We also added wheelchair-accessible camping sites at the Tombstone Mountain and Five Mile Creek campgrounds — and three campgrounds with wheelchair-accessible trails, which is great to see.

Data on the usage of parks and campgrounds in the 2019 season are expected to be available very soon, in a couple of months — really important work there.

I know that, specific to the member opposite, he was asking some very specific questions.

All of our government-owned and -operated boat launches were inspected in 2018. These are managed by the Department of Community Services. The good news is that Community Services is up for debate, as well, here in Committee of the Whole under the supplementary estimates. A little bit of background information there for the member opposite: Community Services did receive \$4.1 million in infrastructure funding from the Government of Canada to update boat launches. The results of the 2018 inspections will prioritize that investment.

In closing on that, over the next six years, the department will be requesting approximately \$1 million in capital funding to fulfill the Government of Yukon's requirement to pay the 25-cents per dollar for the project funding through the Investment Canada infrastructure program — so that's where those dollars will be allocated from.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to thank the Premier. I also just want to throw — I know some of the staff who work in the individual departments are probably listening. I just want to thank the staff who do the work on campgrounds. One of the things you probably hear most — when we were debating tourism earlier — was how clean and how operationally functional our campgrounds are. You know, we're the only jurisdiction that provides wood and stuff like that, so hats off to those who work in there. It's sometimes not a fun job, especially when someone is screaming at you in a different language and you're the attendant, but they do a good job.

I want to switch a little bit over to some other stuff here. I have a question about hunting. I just want to confirm — there was a lot of displeasure with the government's handling of the permit hunt system over the years. It seems to have been changed — there were some things that were done. I just want to ask the Premier for his perspective on that and just ask him if he has received any concerns or complaints from hunters who use the permit hunt system as it's set up now.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It sounds like the member opposite has an exciting camping story, and I would like to maybe draw down on that a bit later, but maybe we'll do that outside of the Legislative Assembly.

I do have to say that I have used the opportunity to meet a lot of Yukoners and non-Yukoners alike with the free wood that

is provided and gathering together at those wood boxes, and making friends by splitting some wood for some folks is always a good way of meeting your neighbours right across the Yukon — and visitors.

When it comes specifically to the permit hunt authorization — the 2019 hunt authorization lottery was a success, with all permits issued before the start of the hunting season on August 1. In total, 4,742 applications were submitted for the 223 available permits. Eight rounds of the return and re-issuance process were completed, and the permanent hunt review — and lessons learned from the 2018 lottery — led to a number of changes, as the member opposite is indicating, for 2019 — including an earlier application period and enabling applicants to see and verify their application history online before applying.

We are always trying our best to make sure that the system matches the needs of Yukoners. Again, having the ability to make changes from the 2018 process to the 2019 process — it's important to always move forward and look at what worked in the past and what didn't work in the past — and expand that. Also, it is really important for us to acknowledge the traditional knowledge of First Nation governments and be able to work with communities as much as we possibly can to share that information on something for is extremely important to most Yukoners.

I don't know too many Yukoners who don't have wild meat in their freezers, Mr. Chair. This is an extremely important issue and one that we take extremely seriously. There are, of course, going to be lots of varying views on the system, but the good news is that the Department of Environment has been working extremely hard to ensure that they are modernizing the system and making it better, including, like I said, the early applicants — verifying the application history online before applying — extremely important upgrades to that system. The purchase of seals and non-resident licences require attendance at an environmental office or recognized vendor. It is important to know that, as well, at this time.

Again, important changes and a suite of improvements are being made to the lottery system. I mentioned a few, but also, we're making all resident hunting licences electronic — meaning no paper licences were sold — and also offering an earlier application period, which began, this time, on April 15. These are just some of those new improvements — providing the ability for applicants to view and verify their history, waiting online before even applying, ensuring permit returns no longer result in the applicant's waiting increasing by one instead of the waiting remaining the same, and also that data and statistics from the 2019 draw — including the distribution of permits by waiting and the number of applicants for each zone — are available to help applicants better understand their chances for success in future lotteries.

So, still working on much more improvements for the future — looking at things like the ability to sell seals through the e-licensing system in the future, also averaging the waiting between the two applicants for joint applications — so much accomplished; much more to come.

I think that the department is doing a lot of great work in using a modernized approach but also, at the same time, implementing some much-needed upgrades to the system.

Mr. Istchenko: Can the Premier confirm for me — you used to be able to register your hunting — where you hunted or what you did — online. I believe now you can't anymore and you have to go into a regional office somewhere. Can you confirm if that's actually a fact for me please?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes, that is true. The member opposite is correct.

I just wanted to say as well that the changes that were implemented, they seemed very well-received. Fish and game associations were very pleased with the outcome as well. Being able to engage and interact with all stakeholders in the hunting community — it's really extremely important that we make sure that any of these changes are based upon the needs of Yukoners first and foremost.

But again — to the member's last question — he is correct.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I will just leave a parting comment on it. As we move, and it started previous to this government — we moved to online and we talk about that a lot in here — how it's way better to have online services. This is where we've gone backwards. It's probably not such a big deal for someone who lives in Whitehorse to go by 10 Burns Road or in Haines Junction. There are a lot of people who don't have an office and their conservation officer is posted in Haines Junction, but they're a hunter from Beaver Creek. In the Chair's riding, there are a few communities like that — they don't have that. So, a few people have been getting a hold of me saying, "Hey, what happened there? Now I have to make a special trip." So, I'll just leave that — I'll let the Premier continue. Thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you to the member opposite for giving me the chance to respond. Again, this is something that they're working on. I agree with the member opposite, being a rural member, that it is important to make sure that there is equal access. I think really, right now, it's about fixing the draw, and that's where a lot of the tension was. I don't disagree with the member opposite, and it is something that the department is working on.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

I'm going to switch over to the ATV survey. I have a couple of questions. Has the government reconsidered making changes to ATV use in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That would be an initiative under the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and also through the modernization of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. There are initiatives underway right now that would consider changes to, as the member opposite called them, ATVs — all-terrain vehicles — but there is more on that through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources or also the modernization of the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Mr. Istchenko: Okay, I'll save that for another time — the ATV stuff.

Another question that I have is: Could the Premier confirm — and just let me know the status of the work being done on the Kusawa Lake area management plan? It has been going on

for a while, and it has been kind of on hold — so if I could just get an update on where that is at.

Hon. Mr. Silver: In a nutshell, there are continued conversations with the three affected First Nations. That process is ongoing. There is nothing new to report at this time specifically to the Kusawa plan.

Again, we have talked a bit on the floor of the Legislative Assembly in the past about the status of parks, protected areas, and management plans in general. Again, this is extremely important work. We are working closely with First Nation governments, but also with the Inuvialuit in certain areas to address parks and protected areas and making sure that management plans are there to guide the conservation and use of these areas.

Management plans are currently in place for nine habitat protection areas and four territorial parks. When it comes specifically to Kusawa, that would be one of the plans currently under development or review. There is also Agay Mene and other areas.

When it comes to habitat protection areas within management plans underway, that also includes Pickhandle Lake and also the Tagish River, and we will continue to work with our First Nation partners to advance and to finalize those plans. We are also committed to our obligations under the final agreements and the regional land use plans and supporting these key conservation areas for legacy and moving into the future.

For a little bit of background, Kusawa park was identified in the final agreements of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and was legally designated in July 2016. A management plan was developed with Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. The plan was recommended in January 2016 but has not been signed by all parties, as the member opposite knows.

Again, there is nothing else to necessarily update the member opposite on right now other than that those conversations are continuing.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

This is something that was a derivative of the Dawson Renewable Resources Council way back in the day when I was a member of the resources council, and it has to do with Movi. I want to talk a little bit about the legislation — and that is domestic sheep interaction. I know that there is work being done on legislation for that.

I know it's important for people in the agricultural sector and the people who have goats and sheep, but it's also so important for our thimhorn sheep population — our Dall's sheep population — across the Yukon, and we do need something. There were some problems that came up from the sheep and goat order. I am just wondering if they are dealing with it, if it is being dealt with quickly, and if it is a smooth transition for those folks who have domestic animals that have to follow this legislation.

Just for the Premier, it's just that they are looking at legislation and at coming up with something so that we don't have wild sheep and domestic sheep mixing. There were some

issues with administering what the department was going to do, and I just want to see if it is now moving smoothly or not. Maybe the Premier can get back to me on another day on that one.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you for the clarification. As the member opposite knows, we returned with some information on domestic sheep populations yesterday after answering some of those specific questions. Just to continue on that, when it comes to animal health protection, we share our environment and our lives with animals, whether wild or domestic. I know that we have different opinions than maybe our neighbours in the State of Alaska as to how to do that.

But again, with domestic animals — from sled dogs to pack horses — I mean livestock to our household pets — we talked about that today, Mr. Chair. It has been a part of our past and it will obviously be part of our future, so we have to take this very seriously — the protection of our animals. They continue to diversify our economy through tourism and agriculture, and they are critical in keeping Yukoners very active and very healthy — even if it's just by small things like taking the dog for a walk or other things as well.

When it comes to the disease risk monitoring specifically, the Animal Health Unit — with partners in the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the public — that's our watchdog for disease risk in wild and domestic animals. Staff monitor the health of Yukon wildlife by leading surveillance programs for things like chronic wasting disease, winter ticks, lead exposures, and also rabies.

I know, in other jurisdictions, the tick situation is becoming unbearable in certain provinces across Canada — so again, being able to look at best practices in other jurisdictions but also working with the stakeholders in both of these departments and the public is extremely important work.

These programs give us an early warning system to really understand and to deal with the risks to the health of our wild species — our moose populations, our caribou populations — even our ravens and eagles and beyond that too. One of the things that we look for is evidence of Movi — which is short form for an extremely large word, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*. It's a bacterium that's associated with a severe and sometimes fatal respiratory disease in wild sheep.

We are aware of the risks that Movi poses and we have been monitoring the harvests of the thimhorn sheep — been doing that since 2013. At this time, the bacterium has not been found in Yukon wild sheep.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

I want to talk a little bit about caribou and specifically, right now, the Finlayson caribou herd. Can I get an update on the hunting ban of the Finlayson caribou herd? Was the hunting ban based on scientific evidence?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We're extremely committed to addressing the Ross River Dena Council's concerns about hunting and other matters in regard to wildlife management and conservation in the Ross River area. No Finlayson caribou permits were made available in the 2019-20 hunting season, as

the member opposite pointed out. This is respecting our shared concerns for this declining herd.

Outfitter quotas are also set at zero for this herd, a commitment we made and communicated in 2018-19. We are continuing our efforts to work with the Liard First Nation, as well as the Ross River Dena Council, to address wildlife management issues, including harvest limits aiming at stabilizing the Finlayson caribou herd.

No matter where you hunt in the Yukon, you are in the traditional territory of a First Nation or of the Inuvialuit, and Yukoners have a long history of being extremely respectful harvesters, taking only what they need, using all that they take, and recognizing that we share the land and its resources. We also share our information and traditional knowledge. Again, I can't think of a better pursuit than working in commitment with the people who have been on the land for thousands of years and the traditional knowledge that they bring to the table — also pairing that up with our knowledge, as a government, and working together to make sure that we address wildlife management issues with an aim at stabilizing those herds.

Mr. Istchenko: I agree 100 percent with the Premier about working with First Nations and that traditional evidence. I believe one of the reasons the permits were cancelled was because there was concern over the herd population and size, but we're hearing concerns on this side that there are still people hunting caribou — part of the Finlayson herd — and they might not be residents of the Yukon or living in the Yukon. They could be coming from other jurisdictions. Can the Premier — with the Finlayson herd — confirm if there are still hunters hunting the Finlayson herd?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, you know, there are anecdotal conversations and then there is our ability to work with Ross River Dena Council and basically try our best to monitor this herd. Those efforts have been going on since 1982. It is hard to make comments on what would constitute illegal hunting on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. If the member opposite does have any information to share, then the department is absolutely all ears as to making sure that people respect the limits and the population. Monitoring of that population is extremely important. That is where we can see the health of this herd. At this point, in 2017, population estimates for the herd were 2,712 animals and showed that it declined since the 2007 estimates. So, 10 years later, we went from 3,077 animals down to 2,712 animals — continuing the declining trend we have observed since 1990 when this particular herd was almost at 6,000 animals — 5,950 animals, to be specific — after wolf reduction efforts in 1990. Also, the numbers we have for a couple of other dates, for the record — in 1996, the herd was at 4,537 animals and in 1999, 4,130 animals.

Again, the department has been conducting the composition surveys for awhile now and introduced permit hunt authorizations for this particular caribou herd in 1989. It had issued 30 permits annually up until 2018, and in 2018, no permits were being issued.

So, again, we have our numbers as far as the size of the herd. We are continuing to monitor that herd. Again, if anybody wants to call the TIPP line or the department to make sure that

any illegal hunting activities — I mean, again, we spoke on the floor about a lot of hunters very cognizant about harvesting — but we all need to be making sure that these herds are being protected based upon the rules that are set out by the governments that are here.

Mr. Istchenko: Now I am going to switch gears. I will stay with the same type of animal — but the Fortymile caribou herd. What hunting opportunities under the management plan are there for Yukoners in this upcoming year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: In this particular area, we're extremely proud of the recovery work that has been accomplished with our government, with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and other partners in Alaska and Yukon on that Fortymile caribou herd. For the past 20 years, we have focused our efforts on the goal of this herd growing large enough to reoccupy its historic range in the Yukon. It is now at a level where a limited harvest in Yukon can be sustainable, and we are developing a harvest management plan that describes the harvest allocations and approaches for subsistence and licensed hunters.

We must be very careful and consider the concerns of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the community of Dawson, and we're working extremely closely with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff and also the renewable resources council and the community to understand their concerns and to ensure that our harvest plan is responsible and respectful. This includes publishing a newsletter to keep communication open with the community.

Mr. Istchenko: I didn't get an answer. What I was looking for, basically, was: Will there be or are there going to be any hunting opportunities set out under the plan for Yukoners this year, this winter season, this season now?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I unfortunately don't have anything more to report to the member opposite. When working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and also with the renewable resources council, these conversations are ongoing. The good news is that the caribou are at a level where a limited harvest in Yukon can be sustained. We know that, again with Alaska, there need to be conversations there as well with quotas and opportunities there. I don't have anything more to report, other than to say that we're going to continue to work on establishing a sustainable licensed harvest for the Fortymile caribou herd, and we are designing that harvest to integrate approximately with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's subsistence harvesting. There is more to come on that, but I have nothing new to report.

Mr. Istchenko: If you read the management plan for it — and it has a harvest plan in there — it has numbers that are allowable numbers for Yukon and allowable numbers for Alaska. For the past two years, there has been a recommendation under the plan for a certain amount of those numbers on the Yukon side to be harvested by resident hunters. We're going into year 3 now, and there's still no opportunity. The Premier has probably heard it lots from Yukoners that their hunting opportunities are becoming less. We have this opportunity, and we've had it now — we're going into three years. My questions would be: Why are there no opportunities? When will this come?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, the member opposite is hunting for some numbers that I can't offer him right now.

We are working on establishing a sustainable licensed harvest.

It's worth noting that there has been no licensed harvest of this herd since 1995. The lifestyle of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is extremely important. The traditional ways and just the stories that we know of — the sizes of these herds in the past. A lot of the focus over the last couple of decades has been on getting the numbers to where they are now. We know that there are some pressures. We know that there are pressures in Alaska as well. We are continuing to work with the renewable resources council, with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. It would be great if the 2020 year had more information for the member opposite because a sustainable size of this herd — it takes a few different governments to collectively work together on this, including the State of Alaska.

We're finally at some good numbers. Following the release of population estimates in 2017, we saw them exceeding a threshold of 65,000 caribou, and that was established by a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in general assembly resolution. We know that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is encouraging harvest of the Fortymile caribou by its citizens, but no licensed harvest has been happening on this particular herd for over two decades now. The herd itself is a very large herd that historically ranged not only just in that particular area, but all the way down to Whitehorse. At times, the numbers were in the hundreds of thousands. To get this, you take a look just to our neighbours in the Northwest Territories and take a look at some of the herds there. Without comprehensive management, you talk about losing opportunities to hunt — if we don't get this right, then we will lose huge opportunities to hunt.

I understand the desire for folks to get out on the land, and I know that there is a great opportunity through the first hunt and the BC curriculum that we're on which really has expanded our ability to take traditional ways of being and doing into the curriculum and classroom, and what a great opportunity this would be to see a healthy herd.

Seeing that these numbers have only recently been up to that area, you can imagine that these are hard conversations in that we want to make sure that the actions that we do now are sustainable into the future. When you see a herd that, in the past, has had a much larger range and has been a much larger size and now we're into these numbers of about 65,000 whereas they were in the numbers of hundreds of thousands in the past, I understand community sensitivities to increase pressure. The member opposite talks about that, and I agree with him.

Increased pressure on the hunting of moose, for example — if licensed harvests were to come to a new area or if we are trying to manage those types of things, it is really important to take a look at all those pressures not only in one jurisdiction, but in all of them. We do have guiding principles from the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, and we take those very seriously. We take our partnerships with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the council seriously, as well, when we are making these decisions.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I will switch to another animal with horns — moose — seeing as the Premier brought it up.

The Alesk moose recovery program was a program that was started and set up with the previous government, working with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Alesk Renewable Resources Council, and many local trappers. They hired a coordinator, and the coordinator went out and talked to trapline concession holders, many of them elders. I think that 80 percent of the concession holders are First Nation trapline holders. They worked with all the trapline holders to look at getting access because there is always an issue with access. The program got the trappers out there. The youth in the community got involved. The local renewable resources council, through funding availabilities, helped with snare sets. It was a good success. You never find a success of a program or something in the first year — something that is set up. It always takes a few years for the success to come out. Last year, the program was cancelled or shut down.

It was a three- to five-year program and it was a good program. I understand from talking to many other Yukoners and local resources councils and First Nations — they were like, "That's a great program. We should do that in our area." So, now it's not being done in any area and it was cancelled in game zone 7 where the program was set up.

If you go out on the land — which, I'm a big proponent of that — the Premier spoke about being out on the land and we are, and there are people who live out there. Our moose populations — we're actually seeing an increase by working with the predators through this recovery program and this trapping program. I'm just wondering, I guess, if the Premier — besides the fact that the money dried up or it was only a three-year program, is there a tangible reason for why this program was cancelled when it was a successful program?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I wouldn't necessarily say the — maybe the specific initiative was no longer being funded, but that doesn't mean that these are not important issues that continue to be funded in different ways.

For the record, moose is the most harvested species by Yukon hunters. Total harvest of moose is at or above sustainable levels in some areas of Yukon, and that's of concern to a lot of people. The highest rates of moose harvest are occurring in areas of easy access. As the member opposite knows, access is getting increasingly easier with advances in technologies. It's not like a couple of generations ago — especially when it comes to sheep.

We do need to take action to manage this extremely important species responsibly and this means preventing population decline while respecting aboriginal harvest rights as well. The Department of Environment has been working extremely hard with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the renewable resources councils, and First Nations to discuss moose harvest management across Yukon including what tools we use and where to apply them.

A little background on that as to the current initiatives the member opposite might not be as familiar with — the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board recently requested renewables councils to submit ideas, thoughts, and commitments regarding the sustainability of various tools that we could use to manage moose harvest — moose tools,

Mr. Chair. The submission deadline just occurred for that. That was October 31 of this year. So, information gathering from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board requests will inform the revision of the 2002 moose tool kit which is expected to be finalized this coming spring — 2020.

Then the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board 2019 public review of proposed amendments — the wildlife regulations currently include a proposal by the Department of Environment allowing for the use of a number of different management strategies and management tools beyond the permit licensing lotteries.

These tools are meant to be for more close and adaptive management of moose harvest across the territory. There is a whole suite of tools currently identified in the moose tool kit, and the updated tool kit and work with the renewable resources council will help us to determine what tools to apply and where, based upon these pressures I mentioned earlier.

In 2016, the Department of Environment created and publicly shared a document on science-based guidelines for the management of moose in the Yukon, and these guidelines provide a scientific approach to integrate with local and traditional knowledge as well.

Mr. Istchenko: Can the Premier confirm when was the last time the Alsek — the moose in game zone 7 were surveyed and when the next survey will be happening?

Hon. Mr. Silver: A pretty specific question — I'm going to have to ask the member for his indulgence, and I'll get back to him with some of those numbers.

Mr. Istchenko: My point on that is, I believe it was surveyed — I'm not even going to — it was a while ago when it was surveyed. When you put a program forward like that and your traditional knowledge and those land users — those First Nation people and non-First Nation people who use that area tell you they're seeing an increase in moose population — ungulate enhancement, ungulate populations are coming back because the program was put in, everyone in that area, in that traditional territory, gets pretty excited and stoked. But how can we make policy or make changes if we don't actually know if these programs are successful?

I always enjoyed my time in the previous government as a member of my community. I wholeheartedly believe in the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and our local resources councils and how they incorporate traditional knowledge into this.

But if we're not going to survey that moose population again and you cancel a program that was actually bringing up a population, how are you going to know if these programs work? The feedback that you then get from — I looked at the *Wildlife Act* proposals and there are some in there that have things to do with trapping. But if you don't put resources toward that science-based information to go with your traditional-based knowledge, how will you know how to bring moose populations back? How will you know to make ATV regulations? How will you know to make any sort of legislation changes — *Wildlife Act* changes — if you don't do the complete management up front where you get the science-based knowledge and you also get the traditional knowledge?

Now, the traditional knowledge, like I said, it is there. People are talking about it. If you go to a local Alsek Renewable Resources Council meeting or you go to the Champagne and Aishihik elders' lunch — they are talking about seeing more moose at Six Mile — it is incredible, but if you are not going to survey it in the next 10 years, what good was everything we ever did?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't think we are disagreeing with the member opposite. I will say that, you know, the member opposite absolutely has a lot of information in this area and has lots of friends — and himself — who are hunters. But he also knows that many hunters in the Yukon are divided about the current status of moose populations depending on the area that we are talking about, and they are very concerned about their future harvesting opportunities.

I know that I hear it a lot — taking a look at areas like Hunker Creek — lots of pressures there. As we expand mining roads as well, we are looking at people being able to access areas that they have never been able to access before. That adds pressures as well.

Again, the extremely important work that is done with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the renewable resources councils, that is extremely important work. I spoke a lot about the tool kits and the process there.

Again, my answer to the last question is valid for his concerns — for his specific question now — about how, if we don't do the surveys, how would we know? So, we went through a whole bunch of different reasons why we do know. But again, I will get back to him on that specific question about that specific survey, but we know that we have to monitor a lot of species — and we do — particularly species of concern that are being harvested — especially when it comes to moose, specifically.

We do this collaboratively; you can't do it alone. It's done with First Nation governments; it's done with the Inuvialuit; it's done with non-governmental boards, as the member opposite suggested, and committees, renewable resources councils, international neighbouring and regional governments, hunters, trappers, outfitters, and individual Yukoners who are out on the land. We do collect this data. It is ongoing all the time. I hope that the member opposite isn't saying that we're not doing that. He asked me a specific question, and I know that he's interested in that. We'll get back to him on that, but we are collecting data all the time to help to identify targets and priorities for research efforts as well. This work informs the decisions that we make on harvest management, on land use planning, and on environmental assessment processes as well.

When it comes to harvest management specifically, ensuring that our wildlife populations are healthy and sustainable is our ultimate goal. It enables responsible harvest opportunities and wildlife viewing for not only this generation of people who are excited to get on the land, but also for our next generation and our next generation. That harvest management — those discussions that are happening across the Yukon and are continuing to happen across the Yukon — they are challenging. Again, we do get anecdotal information from a lot of different areas about increases. I've heard the same

conversation but in different directions on some of the areas in the Klondike where some people believe there's more and some people believe there's less and some people are just luckier hunters than others. That's for sure, Mr. Chair.

In response to information from harvesters and from our scientific surveys and issues that are raised by our partners, we are working. We're working at the Yukon Forum as well and through land claims boards and committees to ensure that harvest species, specifically like moose, continue to thrive.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I think we agree on most stuff.

One thing that I think has been disappointing a little bit for Yukoners is that Yukoners rely on their local resources council and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. They understand how the regulation change proposal works. This has to go with appointees. I know that when the review was started of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board — I have it in front of me here, and I have the final report — there were vacancies for quite a long time. The review is this thick. This document here has a lot of pages on the Yukon *Wildlife Act* rate change proposals.

My question for the Premier is: Does the Premier think it's fair to a renewable resources council or to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to leave positions vacant? Government positions are to be appointed by the minister, but to leave them vacant for months or almost years when the work that these boards and these councils do when it comes to wildlife management are ongoing — they don't have a chance to wait for a review to be done or whatever. Does the Premier think it's fair to have boards not at capacity as set out in chapter 16 of the UFA?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will make a general statement that it is extremely important that all boards and all committees are at full capacity. That is extremely important.

When it comes to the specific question that he asks, we are in a review period. To be very broad and general, I would say that, absolutely, we need to make sure that boards and committees have the human resources that they need.

Mr. Istchenko: So, the Premier believes that the boards should have a full membership and that they are great and work hard — correct?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will also add that this board that he is talking about now — all positions are filled.

Mr. Istchenko: For the record, there were many board members of resources councils, previous and past, who were very disappointed with the lag time and the actual non-appointment of them while they were reviewing the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the local resources councils. They put petitions to the government to try to fill positions, and that waylaid process didn't go over well with a lot of Yukoners. I will leave it at that. The Premier can get up and comment on that if he wants.

I want to talk a little bit about the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board review. In my past life, being a member and working with a lot of the fish and wildlife board members over many years and knowing a lot of them — they are busy. They do a lot. They do a lot just keeping up with the ongoing

things of the day and the regulation change proposals. As you know, things change, governments change, and when governments change, sometimes the direction changes on what they have to do. So they are very, very busy.

If you read through the review, there are a lot of things — like establishing mechanisms in recommendations, consideration for areas of strength and gaps. I could just go on and on in here. How long does the Premier think this is going to take? Is this going to be done without working with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board? All these recommendations are in here. There are discussions and recommendations. Who is going to sit down with the board then? Will they bring back previous members from basically when the board was started in 1993 when land claims came through — bring back a bunch of members and go through this so they can get a really traditional — like, this is how it should work? Or will somebody say, "This is how it's going to work. Welcome to the board."

Hon. Mr. Silver: Well, when you put it that way — great recommendations from the member opposite. I know that he is passionate about this.

Also, I believe that it was in the spring of this year when he urged the ministry to ensure that the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board positions were filled. The good news is that those positions are filled right now.

With the third-party review of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board being submitted to the Government of Yukon on May 7, 2019, and released on September 18 of this year — not a lot of time has passed since the release on September 18 of this year. That review did include interviews with First Nations, boards, board members, staff, alumni — I don't know if the member opposite was one of those past members who was being interviewed — and also government officials and a whole bunch of other Yukoners. It did include a survey that was available to the public.

In addition to that review as well, other fish and wildlife topics of interest at the Yukon Forum happened, including things like trapline allocation, wildlife registration consistent with the final agreements, and a conversation that we talked about earlier, which is the pressures on moose harvesting.

The Yukon Forum tasked the fish and wildlife working group to oversee a third-party review of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. This is a publicly funded board that plays a central role in helping to manage valuable public resources — that is our fish and wildlife, as the member opposite obviously knows.

The third-party review is now complete, as I mentioned, and was presented to the Yukon Forum. That was made public in its release, as I said, in September, and the review report can be found on yukon.ca. The working group and the board are now beginning the implementation of all 27 recommendations. Canada — they're collaborating as well on the implementation there, but again, implementation of not just a few, but of all of the recommendations, conducting reviews — they're extremely good practice, Mr. Chair, for any organization — and in particular, one that serves the public interest in a fast-evolving

world of self-governing, reconciliation, and land and resource management — extremely important work being done.

When you look at all of the different working groups of the Yukon Forum, there's lots of work being done on this particular file. It's extremely important not only to this government, but also to the First Nation governments.

The Fish and Wildlife Management Board — I believe the work that they're doing is extremely important. Now that the review is completed, we will be moving on implementation of those recommendations. We're working collaboratively with First Nations through the forum, as I mentioned, identifying those priorities and establishing those working groups.

Again, an extremely important pursuit. I think the timeline has been pretty shortened, when you think about — starting in the spring from the beginning of this process to now working on the implementation of all 27 recommendations. I think that's extremely good work and extremely important work to coordinate with other governments and other First Nation governments.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that, and just to follow up — so the implementation of the recommendations — does the Premier have a timeline? Are we looking at by the fall of next year? Is there a timeline that has been given? You know, if there's no timeline, it could never ever get done. We could just be always working on these recommendations.

Does he have a timeline?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have a timeline right now, but I do — from the level of importance it has been given not only by Canadian governments, but by the First Nation governments — and when something gets to the Yukon Forum, these are co-agendas that we create together. This is extremely important not only to this government — not only to this Department of Environment — but also to all governments that are involved as we begin implementing the 27 recommendations.

I hope that the member opposite is wrong and that “never” is not the answer.

Mr. Istchenko: I think it was a bit of a surprise actually when it came out of the Yukon Forum — the review, for some — that they were going to review the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. As you know, on this side, we're not privy to the conversations in there. I know that the Alsek Renewable Resources Council had put a proposal forward to look at the working relationship between the Department of Environment and the boards and councils. I think people thought maybe that might happen.

It begs me to ask the next question, I guess — because we've now done a review of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. Like I said, we're not privy to the conversations at the Yukon Forum. Is there a conversation about reviewing, then, our renewable resources councils also?

Hon. Mr. Silver: So, yes — as far as the Yukon Forum goes, those conversations are done in camera — and for good reason. I mean, if you take a look at the Council of the Federation, First Ministers' meetings, Finance ministers' meetings that I'm involved with — there's a certain format where conversations are being had. It's extremely important and confidential information. With the Yukon Forum, the

legislation that designed the concept of the Yukon Forum was created by the Yukon Party. We're following that lead from former Premier Fentie, as he designed the exact formula for the Yukon Forum. It works. It works really well when it actually meets.

Again, whether or not another conversation is going to happen at the Yukon Forum — the Yukon Party should understand that, based upon how it was designed, those agenda items are co-established. That's an extremely important part of these conversations. It would be one thing if all these conversations were just an opportunity to talk about some good news and not actually get down to some hard conversations. I think that's maybe why the forum in the past wasn't necessarily so successful or didn't meet. But now, there are some really important conversations that are being had and dozens of working groups and JSEC — all of these committees moving forward — it's really great to see the deputy ministers and the top officials in First Nation governments working together in a joint action committee setting — and also the working groups being controlled and run by chiefs and councillors. Lots of good work is happening there.

The format of that Yukon Forum, again, is something that we did not create, but at the same time, we do not feel that it needs to be changed either.

We think that the Yukon Party, in designing the Yukon Forum, got the concept right. We are making sure that it does what it was supposed to do, which is to meet up to four times a year. That is extremely important for us on this side of the Legislative Assembly.

A top priority of the fish and wildlife working group is a review of the instruments established under chapter 16 of the final agreements. What a great place to have a conversation — Yukon Forum — with the First Nation governments. We are trying our best to make sure that reconciliation happens and that we work together on some extremely important processes.

When it comes to Yukon Forum working groups specific to fish and wildlife — together, we have established two working groups that include the Department of Environment officials. These are regarding fish and wildlife management and land use planning. The third-party review of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board was conducted, and its findings — as we spoke about — were presented at the forum in September. Again, it is really important that the information is shared from the fruits of that labour. That can be found on the website yukon.ca. As we mentioned, we are moving forward on those 27 recommendations because it is extremely important work and we are excited about it.

We spoke about it a bit, as well, but moose harvest is another top priority. We are working with the renewable resources council offices, the First Nations, and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board on all of those potential changes as well.

Again, I can't stress enough how important those conversations at the Yukon Forum are. It is an extremely valuable opportunity to develop those strong government-to-government relations and to collaborate on priorities shared by

the Government of Yukon and also the First Nation governments.

I know that we are running down on time — there are a couple of minutes left — so I will cede the floor to the member opposite if he has some final questions before we close debate today.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I will just end on — if you look at the regulation change proposals that are forward — the moose regulation proposal — the adaptive management of moose in the Yukon — who proposed the change? Fish and wildlife or the branch — the Department of Environment?

A lot of the changes come from a 2002 document on moose management, wildlife regulations — amending them to enable a minister’s discretion, adaptive provisions for permits to certain subzones, enable their ability to vary season dates and enable use of antler configuration, thresholds, and registration authority restrictions. Everything that they have in there is limiting someone who wants to harvest moose. It is a way to manage the fact that there is not enough moose to harvest.

I think that the Premier might be surprised to find that a lot of the local organizations — non-profit organizations that deal with hunting — and there are a couple that I can think of such as outfitters, resources councils, and boards — and nowhere in here is there a proposal in the regulation change process. There are a few in trapping to help a little bit, but what about complete management? Is there enough food for moose to eat? Are we looking at what moose eat? In here, we are not. Is there enough actual food for them to eat? What is the predator/prey relationship there? What are the actual numbers?

I hear it more and more and I hear it all the time, and people get frustrated. The proposal is coming forward and they are looking at a 2002 document and asking a bunch of questions. They are asking Yukoners, saying, “Well, what would you like for the tines of a bull to be — three or four?” Does that mean that they get to hunt more? No, it doesn’t; we are just going to find ways to manage the last of the moose we have. The complete management of moose populations, caribou populations, or any other populations has to do with what they are doing in other jurisdictions. They are looking at the caribou population — some of the stuff that you are seeing in British Columbia and Alberta — but those conversations aren’t being had. I believe that those conversations need to be had.

Anyway, I will leave it at that. Seeing the time, I move that you report progress, Mr. Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Istchenko that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair’s report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*, 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.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.