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HANSARD

Thursday, April 20, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2023 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

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Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
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Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
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THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 20, 2023 — 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. Mr. Streicker: We have several guests in the Assembly today. They have come for the tribute for the 25th anniversary of the Studio Gallery Association. Please help me in welcoming: Rob Ingram, who is the president and one of the founding members of the Studio Gallery Association; Shiela Alexandrovich, also one of the founding members; and Neil Graham, founding member and the board vice-president.

We also have Matt Poushinsky. He is the son of Janet Moore, who was one of the founding members and a former chair of Friends of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection. We also have Helene Dobrowolsky, Heather Hyatt, and Lillian Lopenen, if we could welcome them all, please.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Earth Day

Hon. Mr. Clarke: This Saturday marks the celebration of Earth Day. I rise to pay tribute to all Yukoners and dedicated organizations who work hard to help protect our environment and combat pollution and climate change. We are working with our partners, including the City of Whitehorse, other Yukon communities, and other departments, to ensure that there is a cost-effective and efficient waste management system in place.

Thanks to all Yukoners helping us to move away from single-use bags as we implemented a territory-wide ban on single-use shopping bags with plastic bags banned at the start of 2022 and paper bags banned at the start of 2023. By the end of 2023, the distribution of other single-use plastics, including straws, cutlery, some food containers, and six-pack rings, will be banned federally.

As part of our commitments under *Our Clean Future*, we are working toward implementing extended producer responsibility in the Yukon and I would like to thank Yukoners for championing this. This will ensure that we have a sustainable recycling program in place for the future. We also want to recognize those who work to protect the Yukon's wildlife and habitats. Through the *Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement*, we will work with our partners to support conservation, increase protection of sensitive habitats, and

recovery actions for species at risk as well as the protection and conservation of new lands in the Yukon.

Additionally, we are working to implement the Yukon wetlands policy. We will be working with our partners in Indigenous, federal, territorial, and municipal governments along with boards and councils to ensure that important wetlands are protected. We recently celebrated the signing of the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area management plan. I am proud of the work that the steering committee did with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, our government, and the Government of Canada to help conserve the fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

It would not be possible, as well, to tribute Earth Day without mentioning the work of the Yukon Climate Leadership Council. Their work in producing *Climate Shot 2030* has provided recommendations that will help us toward our goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent. Across the territory, Yukoners are taking action in the face of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, during Earth Day, I ask Yukoners to reflect on the steps that we can all take individually to fight climate change and to protect our environment, which we are deeply connected to. We are all in this together, and together we can all make a difference to protect the environment for generations to come.

I hope everyone will join me in celebrating Earth Day on Saturday, April 22.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize April 22 as Earth Day. This global initiative is recognized as the largest environmental awareness event in the world and continues to gain momentum as people make a conscious effort to give consideration to their own impact on the environment.

The theme this year is "Invest in Our Planet". There are so many ways in which we can invest in our planet and not just on the territorial or national level. Every small contribution made by individuals and households can make a difference. Participating in cleanups, recycling, and home-efficiency and microgeneration upgrades are all investments that people could make on a smaller scale.

Earth Day is a great day to celebrate our planet while also bringing awareness to ongoing changes we have seen and continue to see throughout the globe. This day sheds a light on the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations. It allows us individually and collectively to reflect on the impact that our lives have on the beautiful territory and the globe. There are many ways for individual schools and municipalities to participate in this year's Earth Day. We can engage kids by explaining: how small actions can impact the environment, for example; how we can all conserve energy; and how cleaning up garbage in our neighbourhood leads to a healthier environment. You can go for a walk with your families and talk about how active transportation has a positive impact on the environment. Maybe while you are out on your walk, take a garbage bag and get a head start on spring cleanup.

I encourage all of us to allow this Earth Day to create new and better habits in our daily lives and continue to do all we can to protect the Yukon for our future generations.

Applause

MLA Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Earth Day. The first Earth Day happened in 1970 in the United States, years before I was born. More than 50 years later, organizers estimate one billion people take part in the annual mobilization. In its first official year, 10 percent of all Americans took to the streets to protest the devastating impact on the unregulated industrial development. The movement even led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. That is a huge number of people who achieved many things worth celebrating to this day.

Today, the movement has gone global, including here in the Yukon, and it is not just on Earth Day anymore that people are speaking up about environmental issues.

Young Yukoners have been taking to the streets to express their frustration with the status quo and to push for better at the Fridays For Future climate strikes. I find these youth-led movements so inspiring. I often think about the work that we do in this House and whether we will leave a better Yukon for the children of today and tomorrow.

Today I pay tribute to all of those who take environmental action in the streets, in their institutions and halls of power, and in their communities, and as we celebrate Earth Day this weekend, let us all reflect on the role we each play in protecting the land for future generations.

Applause

In recognition of the Studio Gallery Association

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today on behalf of the government and the Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 25th anniversary of the Studio Gallery Association. Formed in 1998 by a group of artists from the Yukon and northern BC, the Studio Gallery Association took as its ethos, “art for art’s sake”. Beyond exhibitions of contemporary and experimental work of high quality from within their own ranks, the founding members were unified in their vision to increase awareness and appreciation and capacity of Yukon visual art by offering workshops and studio visits. All of their members regularly teach courses — and my wife and I have taken some of those courses, thank you very much — and workshops and some have been artists in residence at Jenni House and the Ted Harrison Artist Retreat. They regularly do group shows and highlight members’ individual endeavours, as well as larger exhibitions at venues such as Arts Underground, the Guild Hall, and the Yukon Arts Centre. This is a versatile group, creating solo works and, just as often, collaborative pieces moving across media disciplines as the muse demands — painting, sculpture, installation, textiles, and dance.

A few highlights over the years, include 2002’s *The Chess Show* with its life-sized chessboard pieces; 2007’s *Tarot*, which saw the group interpret the mysticism and symbolism of cartomancy; the *Multitudes* sculpture exhibition hosted at Arts Underground in 2021; and, most recently, the *Dark Alice*

exhibition, which saw artists from the collective depict the more sinister aspects of the *Alice in Wonderland* story.

I ask the members of this House to join me in paying tribute to 25 years of inspiration and expression. From its humble beginnings all those years ago, the little blue building on Ogilvie Street owned by Nick Poushinsky and Janet Moore has grown into an exciting and important legacy.

For a quarter-century, the Studio Gallery Association has contributed so much to the territory’s artistic landscape, exploring possibility, and pure imagination. Their story speaks to the desire that artists have to come together and share in the pleasure of creating something magical together.

To Studio Gallery members past and present, including Janet Moore, Neil Graham, Rob Ingram, Maureen Morris, Shiela Alexandrovich, Heather Hyatt, Lyn Fabio, Lillian Loponen, Meshell Melvin, Jeanine Baker, Tony Clennett, Archie Wiggins, and Paul Baker, we thank you for sharing your gifts. We thank you for helping to keep arts in the Yukon vital and vibrant.

On behalf of all Yukoners, we pay tribute to this dedicated collective. We will begin with a spin, travelling in the world of your creation.

Applause

Ms. White: It is really an honour to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and pay tribute to the Studio Gallery Association and this collective of amazing artists. I feel very lucky to be able to call some of these artists friends and even more fortunate that I have some of their works hanging in my house.

Art uplifts. It moves us. It cradles us in hard times and it allows us to feel no matter the day. Art really is life, and these artists have dedicated themselves to sharing their skills and their talents with the rest of us.

Thank you for sharing your perspectives and so much of yourselves with us for the last quarter-century. We look forward to many more years of new works and shows by this dedicated group.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have for tabling the Highways and Public Works *Fleet Vehicle Agency Business Plan 2023 to 2026*.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 18 — response

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 18, which was presented to this House on April 5, 2023. I will also respond, momentarily, to Petition No. 19 on this same topic.

From January 6 to February 16, 2020, we asked Yukoners to share their thoughts on how we should observe time in the territory through a public engagement. Our engagement was prompted by conversations that other jurisdictions in Pacific North America were having with their citizens. It was important that the Government of Yukon hear the public's views on this issue.

We ran an online public engagement survey of Yukon residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. We also invited a wide variety of Yukon associations, governments and organizations to share their thoughts with us in the survey or by letter.

The public engagement was supported by extensive and accessible background information in order to ensure that Yukoners had the opportunity to understand the implications of the time-zone options. The 4,685 Yukoners and 144 businesses and non-profit organizations that participated in the engagement were clear: Yukon should stop seasonal time changes; 93 percent of the respondents supported ending the practices. Of those who wanted to end seasonal time change, 70 percent indicated their desire to remain on daylight saving time, 25 percent of respondents preferred Pacific standard time, and five percent did not have a preference for which time to adopt.

In addition to the survey, we received 38 written submissions representing the views of 143 Yukon individuals, associations, governments, businesses, and organizations. Of the written submissions, 92 percent stated that the Yukon should end seasonal time change and 59 percent supported permanent daylight saving time. We heard Yukoners loud and clear on this topic. They wanted seasonal time change to end and there was support to remain on daylight saving time year-round. We took this feedback seriously and factored it into our decision-making on this matter. Our government changed the regulation regarding the territory's time zone in October 2020, thus bringing into law the Yukon's new standard time. The advantage of this time zone is that Yukoners have more daylight in the early evenings during the winter — more time to enjoy outdoor activities after work and school — and to catch some sun before evening arrives.

For the majority of the year, March to November, we are on the same time zone as we have been for decades. The survey used in this engagement did allow multiple responses from the same IP. This is standard practice to allow multiple members of a household and others who share an IP address to do the same survey. This is also an important measure to ensure accessibility for those who may not have their own home Internet access. Again, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics follows a process to review responses and IP addresses to ensure that results are not influenced by duplicates or by multiple identical responses.

Online surveys are popular and accessible for most Yukoners and are cost-effective for the Yukon. The objective of the online engagement is to collect feedback from Yukoners who want to provide input, not to conduct a scientific survey using samples of the Yukon public. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics is an important internal resource to government and

we use their expertise to create surveys and questionnaires that are methodically sound.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will move on to a response to Petition No. 19.

Petition No. 19 — response

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 19, which was presented to the House on April 5, 2023. This will complement what I spoke to in Petition No. 18. In early 2020, the Government of Yukon asked Yukoners to share their input on how we should observe time in the territory. The result of this public engagement helped to inform Yukon government's path forward on essential time changes.

Over 4,000 Yukoners and many businesses and non-profit organizations participated in the engagement. We heard Yukoners loud and clear on this topic. They wanted seasonal time change to end and there was support to remain on daylight saving time year-round. We considered this input when we made the decision on whether to change how the Yukon observes time, along with the scientific research. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics managed this public engagement survey, which was open to all Yukoners interested in participating. Online public engagement surveys are efficient, accessible, and cost-effective for government. The goal of the online public engagement is to collect feedback from those who want to provide input and participate rather than conduct the scientific survey using samples of the Yukon public. We always strive to improve our engagement techniques and we are exploring new ways to provide engagement opportunities to Yukoners.

As I mentioned in my response to Petition No. 18, we continue to stay abreast of what other jurisdictions are doing on the same issue. We are monitoring their decisions as we go forward.

What I will share with the House is — what I am speaking about is that we have a number of jurisdictions throughout Canada and the US that are looking toward what changes there will be. So, for example, the US House passed the *Sunshine Protection Act of 2021*. That states that we, again, will be able to choose to stay on year-round daylight saving time — is what they are looking at. British Columbia has already passed its own legislation and is waiting on Washington, Oregon, and California's commitments to do the same. Ontario is waiting for similar action from Québec and New York. Manitoba has also committed to staying on daylight saving time once the US makes its change.

We were committed, Mr. Speaker, from the start to listen to Yukoners. I know the Official Opposition had strong views on this, as did others in the House. We went out; we listened to Yukoners; they picked a choice. This is the people's House; we went down that road but we are open to hearing again. So, our commitment is to let's see what happens within the United States and on the west coast. That could affect our ability to ensure that we are aligned when it comes to flights and when it comes to commerce. We are open to that discussion with Yukoners, even to the point where, if we see substantial change throughout North America, it might be prudent to go back and have another survey.

We're not closing the door on doing it because part of our job in the House is to continuously take feedback from Yukoners, but what I will say is that I think it would be best for us to see what changes are made across North America first, and if those changes seem to be in conflict with what we did, then we probably would have to go out and have a conversation. If they are completely aligned with the decisions that we have made as a leader on this decision, then we will contemplate that.

Again, thank you to the people who brought forward their thoughts. We have heard them and will take action after we see what happens with the other jurisdictions.

Speaker: Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Kent: I rise to give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Minister of Community Services to meet with the Mount Lorne Local Advisory Council and residents directly affected by McConnell Lake flooding to discuss the results of the technical report about hydrological assessment and preliminary mitigation options for flooding area, McConnell Lake, Yukon, and plans for the upcoming year.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon Residential Schools Missing Children project

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to highlight the important work underway by the Yukon Residential Schools Missing Children project. The project, which was previously known as the Yukon First Nation Government's Burial Investigation Committee, is leading efforts to bring to light and record the history and impacts of residential schools.

In the Yukon, there were six residential schools that operated between 1903 and 1985. There was: the Chooutla school in Carcross; the Coudert Hall, Yukon Hall, and the Whitehorse Baptist Mission in Whitehorse; the Shingle Point school in Shingle Point on the Yukon's Arctic coast; and St. Paul's Hostel in Dawson. Additionally, the Lower Post school in northern British Columbia housed Yukon First Nation children and youth.

The goal of the Yukon residential school and missing children project is to uncover the truth about children who went missing from Yukon residential schools, including those who may be buried in unmarked burial sites. In uncovering the truth, the project aims to better understand what happened to these children, to bring closure and healing to families and communities, and enable the children to rest peacefully, wherever their family members wish that to be. The project involves the research of historical and contemporary data and knowledge encompassing the search for children, as well as commemorations, memorials, and potentially, educational projects.

I would like to acknowledge the hard-working team leading this difficult, but important, work. The Yukon residential school missing children project team is made up of chair, Adeline Webber; the vice-chair, Judy Gingell; the project manager, Deborah Dupont; and supporting staff and contractors.

Again, I am proud to say that the Yukon government is continuing to support the work of the project through funding, regular meetings, and we will remain able to assist in any other ways requested by the committee. We are pleased to be supporting the project team as they lead this initiative. It is critical that this sensitive work be led by the communities that are most impacted. The project has a working group with space for two appointees from each Yukon First Nation and the transboundary groups: Daylu Dena Council, the Taku River Tlingit, and the Inuvialuit.

Funding for this important work is being provided by both the Yukon and Canada and is ministered by the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Government of Yukon has committed more than \$1.3 million over three years to support this project. We have committed \$225,000 in the 2021-22 fiscal year for the first year of their project, \$595,000 in 2022-23, and \$525,000 in 2023-24. The project has been first focusing on the Carcross/Tagish's ongoing work at the Chooutla residential school site, to be followed by work at the Whitehorse sites, and then the northern Yukon sites. Starting this June, the committee plans to begin ground-penetrating radar searches at the Chooutla site in Carcross. Other residential school sites will be searched in 2024-25.

The project committee is working with elders, First Nation heritage staff, survivors, and families to ensure that proper ceremonial protocols are followed at all the potential burial sites. This work is community driven and takes a collaborative Yukon-wide approach that is unique in all of Canada. I thank the Yukon residential school and missing children project for their dedication to helping us discover the truth of Yukon's residential schools and support healing and closure for our communities.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the update on this important work from the Premier. The history of residential schools continues to be a national tragedy that has impacts that are still felt today. That legacy has left permanent scars on residential school survivors and their descendants across the country and, of course, here in the Yukon.

For many Canadians, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought this historic shame into the light and opened the eyes of many more Canadians to the reality that so many victims have lived with for generations. The Yukon Party supports the 94 calls to action outlined in the TRC report. We wholeheartedly support the important work being led by the Yukon residential school and missing children working group and project team.

I would like to thank the chair, Adeline Webber, for updating Yukoners on this year's work in the Yukon media last month and for sharing her personal story and family experience with residential schools.

I would also like to thank the Premier for the continued commitment of the Government of Yukon to fund and support this work. It is important to all Yukoners that we find all those who didn't come home. We thank everyone who is involved with the Yukon residential school and missing children project for their work and leadership. I hope this work reveals answers that will help in the process of reconciliation and healing.

Ms. White: As the important work of looking for the children stolen and buried in unmarked graves at residential schools begins, we wish for peace. May those doing the work on the ground at the sites of residential schools have the heart and perseverance to do this hard work.

May those poring through documents and listening to the stories from those families have the strength to protect and share their hearts. May those families looking for answers finally have closure and the ability to say goodbye. May those searchers, families, and all involved have the supports they need to walk this difficult path.

These next years will be hard ones, but this important and hard work is part of the healing journey that we all need to take.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The issue of residential schools and discoveries being made across the country has a deep and profound impact for Yukoners and all Canadians. We stand in solidarity with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous Canadians through these painful discoveries. We know they are driving difficult, but extremely necessary, conversations about a dark history.

Learning from the past and acknowledging where we are today, we can build a stronger, healthier future together. We know that we need to do more work to address the legacy of residential schools so that we can advance reconciliation. All Canadians truly have a role to play in ensuring reconciliation goes beyond speeches and words. It was made clear to us by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that there can be no reconciliation without truth.

Our government remains committed and ready to support the work of the Yukon residential school and missing children project in ways that are respectful and contribute to reconciliation and a better future for our children.

Since our government was first elected in 2016, we have been keenly focused on respectful government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations. We revitalized the Yukon Forum and have held it, without fail, four times a year, and we established the National Indigenous Peoples Day as a statutory holiday in Yukon. We have remained committed to the Yukon Days trilateral meetings in Ottawa and ensuring that we are all at the table. Education is a key area for our reconciliation efforts, and we are proud to have worked in collaboration to establish the historic First Nation School Board.

In December 2020, the Yukon was the first jurisdiction to release a strategy in response to *Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. The Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

continues to work diligently with the Yukon Advisory Committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit People — building on what was learned from the partners, families, and survivors at the May 2022 MMIWGS+ accountability forum.

Our government is steadfast in our commitment to work with Yukon First Nations and adapt to changing needs and priorities, and I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Yukon residential school and missing children project team for all of your hard work in planning to bring the truth to light. We will continue to hold this team up and support all efforts to bring about healing and closure.

We remain committed to addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, and we will continue to engage with Yukon First Nations to identify additional ways for advancing reconciliation for the benefit of all Yukoners.

Speaker: This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Diesel generators

Mr. Cathers: The minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has continued to bank the Liberals' entire energy strategy on the flawed belief that renting diesel generators is a good way to fill the growing dependable capacity gap for the foreseeable future. However, he continues to ignore all evidence to the contrary. As a reminder, here is what the Yukon Utilities Board said just last year — quote: "... the Board is not satisfied with YEC's evaluation of renting versus purchasing of diesel units for the purpose of satisfying capacity shortfalls."

The board found that the Liberals hadn't properly considered the ongoing need for backup, regardless of whether new renewables came online. So, can the minister tell us what the impact on Yukoners' power bills will be from his decision to rent diesel generators for the foreseeable future?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yesterday during Committee of the Whole, there was debate between myself and the Leader of the Official Opposition — or questions and answers. During that Committee of the Whole session, I read back into the record again the Yukon Energy president's comments about the difference between the cost of renting diesels versus building a diesel plant. Again, it is cheaper to rent the diesels than purchase the plant. Those are the numbers that I have been given and the numbers that I am working from.

I have asked, in light of the Utilities Board's comments, that we go back and re-check those numbers again, but the answer for the member opposite today is that the cost is cheaper for Yukoners through rental diesels, as evidenced by the fact that it is cheaper to rent them than it is to buy them.

Mr. Cathers: Inconveniently for the minister, the Utilities Board said that is wrong. Despite the minister's assertion that renting is better than owning, the independent regulator slammed those claims as "disingenuous". Here is what they said last year about this: "YEC has not shown the rentals to be a least-cost solution on a short-term or long-term basis. Although these costs were accepted in the 2021 GRA,

YEC will need to show the least cost thermal alternative of rentals versus permanent thermal at the time of its next GRA or risk finding that those diesel rental costs were imprudently incurred.”

Mr. Speaker, these imprudent costs — tens of millions in rental cost — are going to end up on Yukoners’ power bills. Can the minister tell us how much power bills will go up because of this government’s imprudent decision?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The Yukon Party can disrespect the information that the energy utility brings here when they come and sit as witnesses and present information twice now — and the numbers were different; they changed each time — but they actually improved in favour of rental diesels. The president of Yukon Energy was here. He has said twice to the Official Opposition that this is the prudent path. The Yukon Utilities Board has said that they should do more diligence around it. I support that diligence. That is a good thing to do so that we can all be certain that it is the right choice. But the Yukon Party is picking and choosing. There are concerns that are raised by the Utilities Board, asking for more information, and they take that as the thing that they are holding up in front of Yukoners, but what I will say for Yukoners is that the utility has told this House twice that it is cheaper to rent the diesels than it is to buy them.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the independent regulator slammed the government’s claims about that as “disingenuous”.

Earlier this week, we learned that the Liberal plan is for Yukon Energy to rent five more diesel generators than it did last year. That brings the total number of rental diesel portables to 22. We also learned that they will be renting these units well into the 2030s and perhaps longer. What we don’t know yet is how much that will increase Yukoners’ power bills. But we do know that the YUB has been ringing the alarm bell about this. They have expressed concern about these skyrocketing costs being imprudent.

What steps, if any, is the minister taking to ensure that Yukoners don’t see a huge spike in their power bills to pay for this Liberal government’s failed energy strategy?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Twice now I have heard the member opposite use the word “slammed”. He is saying that is what the Utilities Board said. I don’t recall that word ever in there. That’s what I found disingenuous. What I heard the Utilities Board say is that they want more evidence. What steps have been taken? The energy utility, with my support and encouragement, is going to go back and do diligence around those numbers.

What is the difference for Yukoners right now? The information that I have is that this is less expensive for Yukoners. In fact, that’s the information that the Yukon Party has as well because I was here when they were told that information, which they just choose to ignore.

All right, so we will get more to ascertain which is the best solution, but right now, the information that all of us in this Assembly have is that it is cheaper to rent the diesels than to buy them.

Question re: Diesel generators

Mr. Dixon: Over the course of the week, we have learned more and more about the deep flaws in the Liberal’s energy strategy. They have banked our energy future on a series of projects that are now either delayed, overbudget, or simply not happening. The result is that Yukon will be renting dozens of rental generators for far longer than we predicted. What we still don’t know is what all of this will mean for Yukoners’ power bills.

The Yukon Utilities Board is an independent regulatory body that establishes power rates and considers the impacts on customers. We think it is time for them to weigh in about this new information. Will the minister agree to ask the Yukon Utilities Board to conduct a public review of the impacts on Yukoners’ power bills that will result from the Liberals’ commitment to rent diesel generators for the foreseeable future?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: If we go back in time to when the Yukon Party was in power, they started a program called “next generation hydro”. What came of that? Nothing. Why? Because the way in which they worked at it was to impose it on communities. The right solution is to start with First Nations and communities, asking them what projects they would like to bring forward. That’s the work we are doing.

The way in which we did that was through things like the independent power producer policy, through microgen, and through the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative. All of these ways — and on single projects where they are coming to us and saying, “Let’s try a project together.” On top of that, we also have the grid connection, which we are working on for the long term for Yukoners. This is the path toward sustainability.

All of this discussion about rental diesels — right now, we are adding three rental diesels because the backup calculation has changed, which the members opposite know because we went through it ad infinitum yesterday. Also, two are replacing our permanent diesel — or supplementing as we go to replace the permanent diesel plant — and we are short by a year. This is not about rental diesels. This is about the difference between an unsustainable future and a sustainable future.

Mr. Dixon: We think this is about Yukoners’ power bills.

When the Yukon Liberals decided to cancel the construction of a new generation plant in 2019, they made the decision that renting is better than owning. Their entire case was built on the idea that renting was an urgent, short-term plan until new major projects came online. We now know that all of the projects they had banked on are either delayed, cancelled, or face uncertainty and that means we will be renting far more diesel generators for far longer at a much greater cost. What Yukoners deserve to know is what that is going to mean for their power bills. The fairest way to determine that is to ask the independent regulator whose job it is to ensure that power bills are reasonable to take a look at this new reality.

Will the minister agree to have the YUB conduct a review of the Liberals’ plan to rent diesel generators?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I stood and said at the beginning of this Question Period and what I will continue to

say is that I have directed the Yukon Energy Corporation to redo its analysis of rentals versus a permanent plant and to take that to the Yukon Utilities Board the next time they are going there. I have said that they should do that work again.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, everyone thinks that a diesel plant will be cheap. No, it will be very expensive. The price is going up. Not only is the price of the plant going up but so is the price of the fuel. That's not what we want. We want a future that has less dependency on fossil fuels. That's what we're trying to do in shifting the energy economy away from fossil fuels.

The Yukon Party wants us to stay stuck in fossil fuels and that is not a good future. We will continue to do the work to build more renewables but we will also ensure that we have reliable energy for Yukoners when they need it.

That will include diesel backup, LNG backup, and, as if there is a need for generators, we will make sure that it is the most prudent, cost-effective path forward. We have been told that this is with rentals. The Yukon Party has been told that but they don't want to believe it.

Mr. Dixon: What we are asking is for the YUB, the independent regulator, to look at the information that the minister is talking about and provide Yukoners with an opinion about whether or not that is true. Throughout the week, the minister has made it clear that they think renting is better than owning even though he has admitted now that we will need this backup power forever. But he has also said that if he is shown evidence that — quote: "... shows us that those costs are different, then we will happily reconsider that. Things may change — that may be the case — so we will always look at it."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that things have changed, so will the minister agree to have the independent regulator conduct a public review and look at the impact of their decisions on Yukoners' power bills?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, things do change. In 2021, we had the energy utility in here and they told us what the difference was. I think it was \$201 per kilowatt year for rentals and it was for \$209 for a permanent plant. Then in 2022, they came in and they said to us that it is now \$211 for the rental diesels and it is \$240 or \$250 for the permanent diesel plant. It changed; it got worse for the permanent plant. This is not my information; this is our utility's information. They are presenting it to us.

I have asked them to do the work and to make sure to present it to the Utilities Board as well. I think that this is a good thing. But I ask the Yukon Party back: If they give us information again, will they start to believe it now?

Question re: Seniors housing

Ms. White: I recently toured the Normandy Living seniors facility in my riding. Let me start by saying that it is a beautiful building and I wish that all of our seniors and elders could live in such a place when it is time for them to downsize. I also wish that it was a public facility, especially because \$40 million of public money funded this project.

Normandy opened four months ago and most of the units are still vacant. The market price of a room had dropped

significantly from what was being charged initially but the units remain unrented. According to e-mails to this government obtained from an access-to-information request, the owners of Normandy are very concerned about the financial viability of the project — so much so that they are lobbying to get more money from this government.

So, can the minister tell Yukoners how much more public money this government is willing to give this for-profit facility?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Normandy Living, again, is the first Yukon facility that enables continued independence for Yukon seniors in need of supports. This privately owned and operated five-storey building in the Takhini subdivision offers a range of rental options for seniors and includes three nutritious meals a day and weekly housekeeping and laundry services as well as 24-hour building security.

Our government's support for this project reflects a commitment to supporting a wider range of housing options for seniors in a way that aligns with our *Aging in Place Action Plan* while addressing the housing pressures that Yukoners are feeling, along with the housing continuum.

Normandy Living was supported with approximately \$34 million from the Government of Canada through the CMHC, \$4.5 million from the Government of Yukon through the Yukon Housing Corporation, and private investments of more than \$1.8 million — and \$500,000.

When the member gets up again, she can correct the record because I think the comment was that there was over \$40 million from the Yukon government. That is not accurate.

We spoke here at length during our budget debates around the fact that we have some units in place.

I look forward to answering questions 2 and 3.

Ms. White: To be clear, federal money is still public money, especially since we can wonder if the same money could have been directed at a public or other non-profit facility.

The minister is spending millions of dollars for now leasing 26 units instead of the 10 initially promised. There are also four new government positions in this year's budget to work at Normandy. Despite all of this, Normandy continues to seek more money for their project. In an e-mail we obtained, a Normandy executive is asking the government to create a new seniors benefit in order to bail out the project. The executive says — and I quote: "... in the absence of programs from income supplement that exist in other jurisdictions we are likely to make very slow progress..."

We need more affordable and supported seniors housing. What we don't need is this government funding the bottom line of a for-profit enterprise.

So, is the minister considering Normandy's request to increase benefits to Yukon seniors and elders? If so, will it be available to all, or just those living at Normandy?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will touch on a few things. First of all, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation makes their decisions. If that money was not in Normandy, would it go to another organization? Likely, if they applied and went through a process. But again, I am talking about the money that has been committed here.

We did have 10 units that we looked at in the beginning and we have added 16 more. We have gone through a process of requesting that interested individuals look at those units. We have no interest at this point — and it's not something that I'm looking at — in increasing any more money to the project.

What we're watching is the price point that they went out to market with and a lack of interest at that price point. I think that's a real challenge for them. It's also part of what we're looking at with the modelling of Vimy because Vimy has a particular price point and we're ensuring that the Vimy project can be sustainable.

To be very clear, no, there has been no conversation from me about putting more funding into the project. I want to fill those 26 units. It's very expensive, as well, with government buildings like Whistle Bend when you think about almost \$400 per day of expenditures. If we can have people in a Vimy or in a Normandy and it removes their use of those other facilities for up to four years, I think that is good for government, especially as costs rise with their demographic.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that assurance.

Normandy is a great example of the kind of place that Yukon seniors and elders should be able to retire to. What we don't support is the pouring of public money into a private corporation to help them make a profit.

At the same time, the Vimy Heritage Housing Society has been working for a decade to get their project off the ground. When it first opened, Normandy was asking nearly \$5,000 a month for bachelor unit, services included. Four months later, that price for the same bachelor unit has dropped to about \$4,000 a month and many units are still vacant. One Normandy executive stated in an e-mail that stated — and I quote: "We have vacant units in the facility and many are likely to remain vacant in the absence of a top up..."

What business analysis did the minister request from Normandy before committing so much public money to this project, and will he table it in the House?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The member opposite started by saying that we had spent over \$40 million. I guess it was public money.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will answer the question if you give me a second.

I think that we have been clear about the decisions we have made. There were a number of questions that were asked in detail about our expenditures. I am stating right now that we have no interest or plan to put in more funding. We have 26 units that are there. The difference between us and the NDP — and potentially the opposition — is that, when I look at the demographics of the Yukon and I look at how many individuals are going to need supportive living, I believe that the private sector has a role to play. I believe that investing and supporting companies like Air North in the private sector and spending most of our travel with them is the right thing to do. I believe that the private sector has a key role going forward and I don't believe that government can pay for everything. I don't believe that government can pay for all seniors housing. That's what the NDP believes. I do not see any plan — I would like to understand a financial plan that could do that. So, yes, I will

make sure that we work with the private sector, we will work with non-profit organizations, we will build out assets ourselves, but we will have to do all of those things to ensure that the people who helped to build this territory — the seniors who deserve our support — have an appropriate quality of life.

Question re: Diesel generators

Mr. Hassard: Over the past week, we have learned that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will be increasing the fleet of rented diesel generators in the Yukon to 22. Many residents of Whitehorse have complained about the impacts of rental diesels that have been placed by the Whitehorse hydro facility. Those complaints included noise and air emissions. Following those complaints, the Liberals decided to move seven of those units to the Town of Faro, which, of course, is something that has raised several concerns in that community.

Yesterday, the minister confirmed that five new rentals will be going to Mayo. Can the minister tell the community of Mayo why his announcement in the Legislature yesterday was the first time that they had heard of this plan?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The location of the rental diesels is being considered for Mayo. I said that there is a process that is underway. I said that there was outreach happening. I think that the outreach had started already with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun because it was on their traditional territory. There is more work that will happen if the diesel generators go in Mayo to talk with the community. There is a whole process that we will use through the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. So, there is a whole process by which Yukoners can engage. The Yukon Party can let me know where they would like to have the diesels. I am happy to take that input.

We heard yesterday in conversation that the Member for Lake Laberge didn't want them in his riding so I get that people will be concerned about where they go. But, yes, we will work with the community to do this appropriately.

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, the minister also announced the total project costs for the construction of 12.5 megawatts of permanent diesel generators to replace aged-out units in three communities. The total cost for the construction of these new permanent diesel generators, according to the minister yesterday, will be \$49 million. Can the minister confirm that they will be spending more on buying new permanent diesel generators than their entire budget for renewable energy projects this year?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I get so many questions about the diesel generators. I just don't know where the Yukon Party is at.

We have permanent diesels and they will need replacement over time. Think of them as the lifecycle of the infrastructure, like asset management. When they get to the end of their lifecycle, yes, they will need to be replaced, and yes, I think I said that the project costs were \$49 million. That is what it will take and it is not happening in one year. I will get my budget documents to see how much we are investing in renewable energy, but I can tell you this: It is a lot more than the Yukon Party ever invested in renewable energy.

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, the minister also revealed some of the costs of renting diesel generators. In 2021, the Yukon spent \$8.7 million renting 17 of those diesel generators. That is on top of the money that was spent the year before, which means that the total spent on rentals is now above \$20 million over the past years. We can only imagine what the costs will be now that we are adding five new rental units.

Can the minister confirm how much money Yukon has spent on renting diesel generators since they decided that renting was better than owning?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: In fact, when we were in the debate yesterday with the Leader of the Official Opposition, what I committed to do was to pull together all of the costs over the past five or six years, from the start of the rental diesels until today, to look at.

What I can say again for Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, is that if the price of permanent diesels is more than the price of rental diesels, then what I can say with clarity is that the price of the rental diesels is less than the cost of the permanent plant. It is just simple mathematics.

So, I don't understand where the Yukon Party is going with this. I know that they generally are not really wanting to address the issues of climate change, but the issue here that we have in front of us is about whether we rent or own. One of the differences is that when you rent, you are not committed long term into the future. There is a lot of work that you have to do to get to that renewable future, but if what you do is keep building an LNG plant or a diesel plant, you are committed for the future. What Yukoners have told us is no; they want us to move toward a renewable energy future. They want our energy to be reliable, affordable, and sustainable.

Question re: Energy capital project commitments

Mr. Kent: Over the course of this week, we have learned that the Liberals' energy strategy is falling apart around them. The battery project that the Premier announced in 2019 and was set for completion by 2022 has now been delayed until 2024, and the budget has increased from \$19 million to the current estimate of \$35 million. The demand-side management program that the Liberals promised has also been delayed until next year. Yesterday the minister admitted that unless someone appears with \$80 million, Atlin hydro was likely not going to happen, and, of course, Moon Lake is not happening until well into the 2030s. On the other hand, our reliance on rental diesels is increasing rapidly and the Liberals are spending almost \$50 million on a new fleet of permanent diesels to replace aged-out units.

Will the minister now admit that the Liberals' energy strategy is failing?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, I won't. In fact, long before I came into this Assembly — and I spent much time in this territory looking at where we were trying to head on the energy front — the failure was with the Yukon Party. The direction that we are heading — I heard on the news just recently that the cost to governments, to the public, around climate change is five times higher than it was before. And what is the interest of the Yukon Party? To subsidize fossil fuels. That is why our oil

companies are making money hand over fist. No, this is the wrong direction. With all of my heart and with everything I understand as a person who has worked in this field for many, many years, I say that is the wrong direction. Yes, there have been delays, for sure, but we are heading in the right direction. I am so thankful for all of the work and for the support that Yukoners have given to the direction of a head toward a renewable, sustainable energy future.

Mr. Kent: The minister's renewable, sustainable energy future is underpinned by fossil fuels, both rented and permanent diesels. Yesterday in Committee, the minister admitted that the current 10-year renewable energy plan would not be able to meet the current projected demand. That means that there is no plan to get off rented diesels. He also announced that this summer, the Liberals would be launching a review of their plan and carrying out what he called a thorough process for updating the resource plan. Unfortunately, the Liberals now admit that their plan won't meet the projected growth of demand, but we want to ensure that they don't lose sight of the impact of this failure on the electricity bills of Yukoners. So, will the minister agree to consider including the impact on ratepayers when they renew and revisit their energy strategy this summer?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, we always consider the impact on ratepayers. Second of all, we have in place now the 10-year renewable plan, which, as I said yesterday, I have directed the utility to go back and renew. We have, on top of that, a plan to look at a grid connection with British Columbia, meaning that this would be where growth happens over the long term. That is another direction that we should head in that is sustainable. I have also said that we need backup always.

I don't know what the Yukon Party is trying to say to Yukoners — that magically, if they were in power, they wouldn't need backup? No, no, no — this is folly — honestly, Mr. Speaker. What the opposition is talking about is misleading Yukoners. It is sowing concern with them unfairly —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: The energy minister just accused members on this side of deliberately misleading Yukoners, which would seem clearly to be contrary to Standing Order 19(h), accusing another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to direct him to retract that remark and apologize.

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I said was "misleading", Mr. Speaker. I did not say that there was a deliberate falsehood.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Order, please. The temperature of the debate is rising with some members using language that is likely to cause disorder. I caution all members to temper their remarks.

On another issue here, I just want to remind members that when you are speaking to a point of order, please refrain from giving the Speaker of the House direction.

Government House Leader, please continue.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, do I think we are heading in the right direction as a territory? You bet. This is the right direction to go in, and it's not about rental diesels or backup diesels. That's not where the conversation should be. It should be about where we want to go as a territory with our energy future and it is to renewables.

Mr. Kent: Last year, the Liberals legislated a new greenhouse gas emission target of a 45-percent reduction from 2010 levels by 2030. The original 30-percent target was based in part on the success of the 10-year renewable energy strategy. However, the Liberals have now admitted that strategy is failing and that the fleet of rented diesels will expand and play a major role in keeping the lights on until at least 2030 and likely well beyond that date.

What assurances can the minister give Yukoners that the climate targets that the Liberals have legislated can be met given the growing reliance on fossil fuels to generate electricity?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Another part of that act that the Yukon Party voted against, by the way, was that we make sure to maintain a certain threshold of renewable energy across our electricity grid. I am pretty sure it said 93 percent. You know what? I went back and looked at the numbers over the past year, and one of those — I am a data geek; I go out and look at it all the time. The members ask questions about this so I go look. The answer is that, over the past year, 93 percent of our energy was produced using renewables and seven percent was from LNG and diesel, so we are on a good path right now. We have the potential as a territory to go far if we continue to invest in renewables. It's so important.

Do I think that the path to a 45-percent reduction is easy? No. It is hard, but I think Yukoners want us to do the hard work because they believe that it is the right thing to do.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice to call motion respecting committee report

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I give notice, pursuant to Standing Order 13(3), that Motion Respecting Committee Reports No. 5, the motion for concurrence in the *Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges* presented to the House on April 18, 2023, shall be called as government designated business.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 23: *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 23, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will just take a few moments to revisit the updates and the amendment that we are proposing through this bill.

This bill's purpose is to improve legislation in the Yukon by updating it to accurately reflect the new Sovereign of Canada. As these administrative updates are currently required to be made by statute, a provision is being proposed to be introduced to the *Regulations Act* as well to allow similar updates, about the gender of the sovereign only, to be made through regulation in future should it be necessary. The provision is narrow and specific in scope and in application so that no legislative changes with policy implications may be made without the Legislative Assembly's approval.

It is our government's responsibility and commitment to ensure that the laws of the Yukon are accurately and efficiently updated. This bill honours that commitment. I urge the members of this Legislative Assembly to support Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, which will permit our Yukon legislation to accurately reflect the fact that there is now King Charles III and that he is the sovereign of the country.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's comments. In general, the content of this bill is fairly unremarkable and administrative in nature; however, the inclusion of a section that will allow Cabinet to unilaterally change legislation is something that we continue to take issue with. I believe that the only body that should be able to change laws in this territory should be the Legislative Assembly, and not Cabinet unilaterally.

For that reason, we voted against that section during Committee debate, and we will be voting against this bill on that principle as well.

Ms. White: To be perfectly frank in this House, initially, I really struggled with clause 23 of this legislation. Then I realized that, in 1991, the NDP put in a similar clause in the *Environment Act*. In 2012, the Yukon Party put a similar clause in the *Financial Administration Act*. There was a clause in 2002, and one other, that had already been done by a previous Liberal government.

I understand that this is very pointed. I also hear the concerns raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition, but

the nature of this provision of clause 23 is very specific. Had I not been able to find other references in other pieces of legislation, I would feel differently, but I was able to find different examples where every colour of government has put these in. I would suggest that, at different points, they were more far-reaching than this clause.

I do not want to be in a situation where every piece of legislation that is not captured under this comes forward with a necessity of putting “Her Majesty” to “His Majesty”. My intention today is to make sure that, as we proceed forward, the legislation that we’re debating isn’t those amendments but actual amendments that make real differences in the lives of Yukoners.

To be honest, initially, I was very concerned about clause 23. Again, I found references where every colour of government has put in similar clauses and that is why we will be voting in favour of this legislation.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am not sure what is funny.

I will move on with a few comments. This section, clause 23, exists in this bill and is a commonly used legislative tool. It is, as I have said, extremely narrow in scope, and it is very narrow in application. It only relates to the gender, or the name, of the sovereign in future applications. It exists with respect to acts exactly like this one in other jurisdictions, almost word for word, in the Alberta legislation, for instance. It exists in other versions of Yukon legislation, as noted by the Leader of the Third Party.

I can indicate that, with respect to the sovereign’s name, for instance, it exists in Manitoba and New Brunswick, which were actually completed before the death of Queen Elizabeth II, in anticipation that, one day, that would happen. Since her passing, Alberta has made the same kind of opportunity and legislation — as I have said, almost word for word.

As the Leader of the Third Party has noted, there are examples here in Yukon legislation, in the *Environment Act*. There are examples in the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. There are examples in the *Electronic Commerce Act*; and perhaps the most far-reaching example exists, having been brought in in 2012 by the then-Yukon Party government, in the *Financial Administration Act*, which gives very far-reaching authority to the minister in certain circumstances.

I don’t need to go into the explanations with respect to the details of those provisions, but I was certainly prepared and looking forward to be able to answer questions about those. Yesterday, the Yukon Party chose not to bring any questions in Committee of the Whole despite the fact that they had mentioned that they would.

The provisions set out in this bill are so narrow that they are not even appropriately compared to provisions that allow statutory lists to be adjusted by regulation, for instance, which is squarely in the authority of Cabinet. They are not anywhere

close to provisions authorizing regulations to define terms that are used in the statute, for example, and they are not close to provisions authorizing a regulation that exempts a legal person from an application of a statute, for instance. Those are all available and appropriate legislative tools used in Yukon legislation.

I am sorry to hear that the Yukon Party have taken the position that they won’t vote for this legislation. Mr. Speaker, this is factual: Queen Elizabeth has died. There is King Charles III. These are facts. We are asking that these facts are reflected appropriately in Yukon legislation. Taking a political position to blindly oppose, truly, anything that is brought forward in this Legislative Assembly by the current government, including every penny of a budget to support Yukoners, the Yukon Party will now vote to basically refuse to recognize that Queen Elizabeth II has died and that our Yukon legislation should be updated to recognize King Charles III as the sovereign.

I truly think that is an absurd position.

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. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are nine yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

Motion for third reading of Bill No 23 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 23 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of the Yukon, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Bernard enters the Chamber announced by her Aide-de-Camp

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Act to amend the Municipal Act (2023); Act to amend the Coroners Act and the Public Service Act (2023); Community Services Statute Law Amendment Act (2023); Act to amend the National Aboriginal Day Act (2023); References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023).*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

This is my last appearance in the Legislative Assembly. I am not here next week, as I will be in Vancouver to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and my mandate as Commissioner of Yukon is ending on May 31, but we are as busy as ever until then.

We are organizing an event for the coronation of King Charles III. We are organizing events surrounding the first-ever Yukon Francophonie Day funding program. We are launching the exhibition of the francophone presence in the Yukon on May 11, and I am putting the final touches on our booklet on heraldry in the Yukon and our book on the history of the Office of the Commissioner of Yukon. These projects are part of my office's celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Yukon joining the Canadian Confederation.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Helen Fitzsimmons for her 46 years working in government, and I wish her a well-deserved retirement.

Merci. Thank you. Günilshish. Shāw nithän. Mahsi' cho.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: 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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Request for Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole

Deputy Chair: At this time, I will ask if any private member wishes to volunteer to be Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole, as I would like to take part in the debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, in Bill No. 208.

Member for Takhini-Kopper King rises

Acting Chair (Ms. White): Order, please.

Bill No. 208: *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — continued

Acting Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any further general debate?

Women and Gender Equity Directorate — continued

MLA Tredger: I will start by thanking the officials for being here again today and everyone listening in.

When we left off this debate, we were talking about taxi safety, and I just want to drill down a little bit on the response to some of the recommendations to the taxi report that were directly for Yukon government.

The first one was that the Yukon government review the criteria they use when selecting taxi companies to transport vulnerable individuals. I am wondering if that has happened, and if so, what those criteria are.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the continued question around taxi safety. I will reiterate some of my answer that I gave in our last debate. Yukon's MMIWG2S+ strategy includes action 2.8 on transportation and communication, creating safe and affordable transportation and communication options to and between Yukon communities. The Yukon Advisory Committee on MMIWG is actively working on an implementation plan based on the action in the safety strategy.

In December 2022, the Yukon Advisory Committee on MMIWG released a document, entitled priority action items: *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-spirit+ People Strategy*, which outlines 12 priorities from the strategy. Reliable and affordable and safe transportation services within the City of Whitehorse and between rural communities was identified as a priority.

The Yukon women's coalition taxi safety report is listed as an implementation consideration and that work is advancing, and the Women and Gender Equity Directorate will certainly be a partner to that work and may have some lead; however, there are a lot of partners at the table and we will be working

with them. We do see this, again, as a priority under the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*, and we will be looking at that as one of our priority areas that we have submitted as we have done the consultation on the national action plan. So, there is a lot more work to come on this, and we will be happy to bring back information once we have it.

MLA Tredger: I was asking about a very specific recommendation from the taxi safety report. I wasn't quite sure what to make of the answer except maybe that the government doesn't plan to act on that recommendation until they act on the recommendation as a whole. If that is not correct, please correct me — but I was wondering specifically about the recommendation that YG review the criteria they use to contract taxis for vulnerable people. So, I was wondering if there is a specific response to that item. I will leave that with the minister.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Sorry, I misunderstood the question — specifically around the review of Yukon government's policy protocol criteria when working with taxi services, we do have a specific policy that we work within, with the Department of Education, for instance, and as a government as a whole, this will be a consideration as we dig into the taxi safety and transportation around the answer that I had just given in the MMIWG strategy around 2.8 and the further document that I also cited around the priority action items.

This would be an area that Government of Yukon would be looking at, in terms of working with vulnerable people. It is certainly an area that, from the Government of Yukon perspective, is one of the areas that would be led by Government of Yukon, obviously, and we would look government-wide at different policies that are in place because there are different policies for different user groups.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. One suggestion I will add, as that work is happening, is that, as those policies are updated and changed, that information gets communicated out to the people using the taxi services, because they will have to make a decision about whether they feel safe taking a taxi to an appointment, for example. If there has been good work done to make sure that taxi is safe for them, that's great, but they need to know it to make that decision. That's my suggestion as that work goes forward.

I have a question about All Genders Yukon Society which gets funding through Health and Social Services, but I was wondering if this department is involved at all with their transfer payment and contract.

Hon. Ms. McLean: In our first debate, I talked quite extensively about funding to equality-seeking organizations and that our directorate's total budget is approximately \$3.6 million with \$2.19 million and a bit going to transfer payments to equality-seeking organizations. Our contribution is to Queer Yukon. We currently do not have a transfer payment agreement with All Genders Yukon. We are not involved directly with that transfer payment agreement.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister. I assumed that Health and Social Services was the main one administering — but I did want to ask about it here and I am going to flag it

here. I know it is not this department but I don't know if I am going to get a chance to flag it in Health and Social Services.

All Genders Yukon Society was providing direct services. They were funding counselling appointments for people in the trans community and the people close to them — a really essential service that made a huge difference for a lot of people in the community — really, really life and death stuff — but it had an immense toll on a volunteer board. They were fighting for scraps of funding that were just barely covering — not enough and they were really struggling, and eventually the board decided that they couldn't do this work and could not provide this service as a volunteer board. So, last November, I think it was — it might have been December — they announced that they would no longer be providing that direct service provision anymore. Then the organization told me that they came back to the Department of Health and Social Services and told them that, so I was really surprised in this year's budget to see a transfer payment of, I believe, \$100,000 in Health and Social Services to All Genders Yukon Society, which is the same as they had in the previous year, because they are not providing that service anymore. I assume it was an oversight. I don't know for sure. I will ask, for sure, for more information if I get there in Health and Social Services, but I assume that was an error. Now, the organization is still doing work. They are providing group therapy events. They are providing social groups and building community in that way.

I guess my hope is that this department could perhaps work with Health and Social Services to reach out to that organization and make sure that they get funding to do the work that they are doing, that they can be really flexible in that funding, and that it can be used for the work that they are doing and support them in that.

I will leave that because I know that it's more Health and Social Services, but I am hoping that the minister and her department could partner on that with Health and Social Services.

I did want to ask about the Queer Yukon Society funding. What is the expectation for Queer Yukon to provide consultation services to the government?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I think what I'll start by saying is that Yukon government is very committed to improve inclusion and create equity in its programs and services. We see Queer Yukon as a key partner and are very happy to have a transfer payment agreement with the society. They are invited from time to time to present to the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues and were, in fact, there in March.

Again, we do have a transfer payment agreement. I think that we are in year 3 of that current transfer payment agreement, but there's no request for unpaid consultation services with the organization. We certainly see them as a partner and work closely with them, but we do not ask them to come and provide consultation services that are unpaid.

MLA Tredger: I appreciate that answer from the minister. I know that when Queer Yukon was getting its first funding along with All Genders Yukon, from my memory, one of the reasons behind it was that government was finding that they were often having these conversations with nobody from

the community in the room and they wanted someone they could go to, to ask for advice. I just wasn't sure where that was at so I appreciate that answer.

I want to finish up by talking a little bit more about the women's equality fund and the Indigenous women's equality fund. I know that there has been some discussion about it already with the Member for Porter Creek Centre, but I just want to dig into a little bit because there is this letter that has been discussed. It was sent on February 28 to the minister and a number of us received it as well. It has this chart that shows the different organizations' core funding and what they would actually need to do their services, and the discrepancy is remarkable. I want to dig a little bit into what is supposed to be happening with that funding.

I am going to start with the three organizations — Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, *les Essentielles*, and Yukon Status of Women Council — that all receive \$49,000 a year from the women's equality fund in core funding. So, \$49,000 a year is a big number for someone's personal finances but not a lot of money for an organization. That is a partial position that wouldn't cover space costs, it wouldn't cover administration costs, and it doesn't cover a full-time salary.

So, I am wondering: What is the expectation that these organizations do with that \$49,000 a year?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, we have a number of organizations that work within Yukon that are — the way I have always described them — “quality-seeking groups”. Each has its own mandate and are registered under the *Societies Act*. The organizations that are funded under the women's equality fund, which is a fund that is \$197,000 per year and is intended to be funding to assist with operational or administration for their respective organizations. Right now, we have the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre that receives \$55,000, the Status of Women Council that receives \$49,000, the Yukon Women in Trades receives \$49,000, and *les Essentielles* is \$44,000. Then, we also have the Indigenous women's equality fund and I can get into that if the member wishes me to.

MLA Tredger: Thanks to the minister for clarifying those numbers.

I guess I am just trying to understand what that funding is supposed to do for them. The minister said operational and administrative funding. With less than \$50,000 a year, that would cover a portion of a salary. It certainly wouldn't cover a full-time salary. If you were covering that partial salary, I don't know what would be leftover for rent, for office supplies, or for any of the many costs that an organization has just to run an office.

I am trying to understand what the purpose of that money is for these organizations and what the expectations are in terms of what they do with it.

Hon. Ms. McLean: The work of the women's organizations is important in creating work toward an equitable society. These organizations provide direct services to women, girls, two-spirit, and gender-diverse people, as well as research, advocacy, public education, and programming.

Women and Gender Equity — again, as I have highlighted, just over \$2.1 million of our total budget goes to equality-

seeking organizations. This particular fund, in recognition of this important work that women's equality-seeking groups do to contribute to this work — we have a total fund right now of \$197,000 per year in operational support for women's organizations. This funding goes to a diverse array of important programming, including drop-in services, advocacy work, and public education. There is also project-based funding that is available, and we know that we are not the only funder of the organizations that we are talking about today.

The fund is administered by the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. It provides organizations with contributions for operational and maintenance costs and is based upon a three-year work plan and budget. So, that is submitted to us. It is not directed by us; it is submitted to us. Generally, the funds can go toward covering any of the following operational costs of the organizations. It could include administration; it could include rent; it could include wages, expenses toward phone, fax or telephone, bookkeeping, and audits. It is not intended to cover the entire cost of an organization; it is intended to help offset those costs.

Generally, the work plans are part of larger work plans for an organization. Again, organizations have their own mandates; they are not set by us. They are organized under the *Societies Act* for the Yukon. All of that, I believe, would be in the public record if members opposite were — or they could request that from these equality-seeking organizations. I think that is also possible.

MLA Tredger: I just want to pull a little bit from this letter that was sent. It starts out by saying: “Many of the organizations listed below...” — and I will just interject that this is most of the equity-seeking organizations in the Yukon — “... are operating entire organizations on core funding budgets that equate to less than half the cost of a single full-time Yukon Government employee. Our inability to equitably remunerate our staff results in significant retention and recruitment issues, further disrupting our capacity to realize our mandates.” Later in the letter it says: “We struggle with squaring Yukon Government's declarations to address and mitigate gender-based violence in our territory while your funding decisions reflect the opposite.”

I am just trying to imagine — if I were an organization — and I appreciate that they set their directions and their work plans, but I imagine that they have parameters and they are told how much funding they will get and their work plan reflects that. In this letter, they have very explicitly said that they need more money to do their work. I know that there is project-based money available but the amount of time it takes as an executive director and as an organization to chase funding pots, write applications, figure out funding streams, and sort out which funding stream can pay for computers and which can pay for phones and which can pay for repairing the office — it is so much work to try to juggle pots of money like this. The beauty of core funding is that it is core funding. It can be used for what the organization needs and it means that there is some guarantee to it. There is some consistency to it. There is some longevity to it. It really can't be replaced by project funding.

And the cost when you do replace it with project funding, which is what we are seeing now, is that organizations spend their time scrambling and spending so much time on administration instead of doing the work that they are meant to do and the work that is the intention for them to do. I know we have discussed this a lot of times in the past. We will probably discuss it again — I mean, I hope we won't discuss it again in the future. I hope it will be different.

I also just want to say that I started out by talking about the Yukon Status of Women Council, les Essentielles, and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology simply because those were the ones with the lowest funding, but Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre isn't far beyond them. The Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle gets a bit more funding but they, too, have indicated that they need almost \$200,000 more in order to do their core work properly.

Then, of course, there are the other organizations listed in this letter that get their funding through Health and Social Services so I haven't touched on them, but the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, Dawson Shelter Society, Help and Hope for Families Society do incredible work and they are really doing it on a very tight budget. It is hard. It is really hard for them and they have talked about the impact that it has on staffing — trying to recruit and retain staff on wages that don't chalk up to Yukon government wages. That is really hard. You are going to lose people. That is what is going to happen.

I don't have any further questions. I will leave that there for the day. I do appreciate the officials being in here and I appreciate the minister's answers. I hope that I have given the minister some food for thought. I really hope to see more funding come to this sector.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I certainly am very aware of the requests to increase and stabilize the equality-seeking sector within the territory, within the Yukon, as part of the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. We are certainly working toward that agreement. We are engaged with Canada on these discussions. We have been engaged with the Yukon Women's Coalition; I have met with them and I will meet with them again. I have committed, of course, to doing that and working with them to develop a sustainable way forward and to work together on the implementation of the Yukon's part in the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. I think that it is an incredible opportunity for Yukon and one that I have worked on at the national level to help create along with my colleagues from across the country. It is historic in terms of the investment that has not existed prior to now. We were very proud to endorse the national action plan in November 2022, and there is certainly a lot of work that is going on now with the federal government working toward a bilateral agreement. I look forward to further discussions with our partners in the Yukon.

I think I have to go back to say that there is a lot of work going on in the territory around ending gender-based violence. We do also see Yukon First Nations as partners in this work. We have worked very closely with them throughout my time in this position, especially when it comes to our response and

work around missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit-plus people.

We know that the work that has been done on that plan digs very deep into the systemic issues that exist for not only Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit-plus people, but all women and girls, so we know that the work that will be done on the implementation of this strategy will go a long way as well toward addressing gender-based violence in Yukon overall. So, for me, this is lifelong work. It has been an honour to do this work since 2016 in this role first as Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and now Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity.

We're making strides. I remember my first trip to Ottawa, and the federal minister was sitting down with me and she asked me how we can work together. I said that we need funding in Yukon. That was something that was historically not there. We are very proud that we are getting to a place where we have been able to leverage funding from Government of Yukon. I know that the equality-seeking groups will talk to you about the new funds that became available to them over the last several years around the capacity fund at the federal level, which was a fund that was leveraged with the money that we were able to provide in our women's equality fund. That ended this last year — the capacity fund — and I know that it went a long way toward some of the stabilizing and some further planning with equality-seeking groups. I think that there is still more work to do in that regard.

Also, the Indigenous women's equality fund was another fund that was established. It's new; it didn't exist when we came into government in 2016. It also was an opportunity that we had with the federal government to establish this new fund on a shared basis. That fund has gone a long way as well toward building capacity within our organizations and to ensure that services are being delivered.

I wanted to go back a moment — well, first, before I move forward, the funding that is provided to our shelters — and we have three but we have other projects that are underway.

All of this, under Health and Social Services, provides the core funding to the shelters that exist in Whitehorse through Kaushee's and Betty's Haven, Help and Hope for Families in Watson Lake, and the Dawson City Women's Shelter. There is also work toward establishing other projects that I will leave for the Minister of Health and Social Services to speak to.

We know that this is an important part of ending gender-based violence — to ensure that there are safe places for folks to go to — and we have been supportive of the new Indigenous women's shelter that is being built at Whistle Bend. We have provided the land. We are working with the Council of Yukon First Nations on this project, primarily through Health and Social Services and the Yukon Housing Corporation. These are important projects and there are others that are underway, but I will leave that to my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I wanted to just make that commitment to reach out to All Genders Yukon to have a direct discussion with them about the question that was posed today. I will certainly be following up

with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, around that question. I look forward to that discussion.

I, too, would like to thank the officials for being here today, Acting Deputy Minister Mary Cameron and acting director Clare Daitch. Thank you so much for your support today.

Acting Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line.

MLA Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, cleared or carried

Acting Chair: The Member for Whitehorse Centre has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Acting Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$3,672,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil cleared

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$3,672,000 agreed to

Women and Gender Equity Directorate agreed to

Acting Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any further general debate?

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Deputy Chair. It is good to have you in the Chair this afternoon. I have with me, my officials — Matt and John — again. I look forward to the questions from the opposition this afternoon; we are going to

have a fun Thursday. I am going to pass it over to my colleagues across the way.

Ms. McLeod: I want to welcome everybody back here today.

According to yukon.ca, Tetra Tech was contracted to produce a report on hydrological assessment and preliminary mitigation options for the flooding area in McConnell Lake. This technical report was received on March 31, 2023. The firm didn't talk to any of the residents directly affected by this flooding, leaving them to feel, of course, like their voices have not been heard.

Will the minister agree to hold a public meeting with the Mount Lorne LAC and area residents to discuss this report and the proposed mitigations for the short- and long-term?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, I have already committed to doing that, and I will be doing that in the coming weeks.

Ms. McLeod: I heard the affirmative, but I didn't actually hear if there was a timeline involved there, please.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I didn't give a specific date. I said that I would be setting up a meeting with residents in the coming weeks.

Ms. McLeod: All right, I thank the minister for that.

The confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the NDP includes a commitment to consult with communities that are affected by the Liberal decision to shut down transfer stations in Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, and Keno. Now, of course, this is an issue that is very important to many Yukoners and has been an issue that we have raised frequently over the last several years.

Can the minister tell us when this consultation will begin, and when can Yukoners expect to see community meetings hosted in these communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is a short answer and a little bit of an expanded answer, so I will give you the short answer first. The officials from Community Services are planning to meet with residents in these communities this summer, and then there will be a follow-up meeting which is planned for this fall. The meeting dates have not yet been set. We will work with residents on the scheduling of those meetings.

But I am, again — and I was heartened this afternoon, because there was an Earth Day tribute today, and I heard the Member for Klune talk about how the Yukon Party is committed to making small changes in the face of Earth Day to make lives better for Yukoners, and this is one of those things.

I hope that we can now count on the Yukon Party's support for revising and improving the territory's waste management facilities, and taking little steps that we all must take in the face of global climate change, and making sure that the earth is protected, and that our communities are kept healthy and safe, and that our pollution is reduced. This is one of the steps that we have been asked by AYC to take. We have taken it. There have been years of inaction on this file prior to 2017 when my predecessor picked it up and started moving this file for the benefit of all of Yukon. It was done at the behest of AYC.

The closure of these sites — unsupervised, unwatched dump bins that anyone coming along the road could dump in noxious chemicals, or paints, or whatever — is one of the small

steps that I think the Member for Kluane was alluding to this afternoon in his Earth Day tribute.

Ms. McLeod: I appreciate that officials are going to go out and meet with these communities. I guess my question would be whether or not the minister is planning to meet with any of these citizens. Arguably, this is actually a big change for the people and the Yukoners who are affected by this proposed change, so I don't want the minister to go away thinking that this is a small thing — so, just that question about whether or not the minister is going to go out and meet the residents.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I take a community tour every year. I have plans to meet with citizens across the territory this summer and into the fall. I am sure I will have more conversations — because I have already met with many of the people we are talking about this afternoon — with them in the summer and early fall.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that commitment.

Can the minister tell us which landfills will be receiving compactors in the next year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The question gives me optimism — it makes me optimistic, I guess, is a better way of putting it, because it suggests that the Yukon Party is online — is on board and supportive of the regionalization plans that the Association of Yukon Communities asked my predecessor to implement and which I am fully in support of implementing.

As far as the actual infrastructure for the landfills, the very first step is to actually get deals with the regional — with the municipalities that are going to be implementing the regionalization initiative. Once that is done, all waste disposal facilities will have gates, operating hours, tipping fees, and on-site staff to monitor and manage the waste streams. Infrastructure to make our landfills better will be part of this approach. We are currently still in negotiation with communities across the territory to implement this. Those deals are progressing, and when I have more news on this file, I will certainly bring it to this House.

Ms. McLeod: I have a question about burning permits — now, we know that we can go into an office and get a permit in person, so I am wondering if the Government of Yukon is planning to allow Yukoners the option of applying for a burning permit online.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. It certainly helps to understand our department better. I will tell the member opposite that burning permits are actually issued by EMR. When they come back into the Chamber, I am sure my colleague would be happy to answer that question.

Ms. McLeod: I am going to move on to a question regarding the septic receiving station built in Haines Junction at the municipal yard. This infrastructure cost over a million dollars and is not working and has not worked since its construction. What are the issues with this facility?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm sorry, I could not hear the name of the facility. I missed the name of the facility, so could I just ask for clarification, please?

Ms. McLeod: It's the septic receiving station in Haines Junction.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will have to get more information from the member opposite. I don't know if this is a municipal facility that we helped construct — we are not sure what facility the member opposite is talking about.

Ms. McLeod: I don't really have the specific information as to who constructed it. It does belong to the Village of Haines Junction. I presume the government had some hand in seeing this built, and it doesn't work. The question, at the end of the day, becomes whether or not the Yukon government is prepared to help the village with making sure it works, even if that includes moving it to a better location.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I had a fairly long conversation with the Mayor of Haines Junction just this week. He did not bring this issue to my attention. As I said, this is not something that has come up through my meetings at council a few months ago or with the mayor this week.

I will, though, through the Department of Community Services and the community advisors who do an absolutely tremendous job of serving our Yukon communities, ask about this issue and see where it sits currently, but it has not been flagged with me by the mayor as an issue in the Haines Junction municipality, and I asked that question specifically, so I am a bit — but I will check into it for the member opposite.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for his commitment.

What is the status of the new Pelly pool? We had heard that it was damaged by a power outage this winter. If the minister could give us an update there, please.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm really happy to announce today that we're looking forward to a grand opening of the Pelly pool on June 10.

Ms. McLeod: Is the minister saying that there was no damage to the pool?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a new facility in the community of Pelly. I have not heard any information from the department that any electrical damage has inhibited the procedure to actually have the pool open on June 10. That is our intention, and I am sure that if there is — nothing of consequence has ever come across my desk, as far as the Pelly pool. As I said, the grand opening is scheduled for June 10.

Ms. McLeod: My understanding is that the power went out and the pool froze as a result of that — I mean, froze solid as a result of that event. Is the minister saying that there was no damage and it continues — even though it is a new pool — no damage and opening as scheduled?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The power did go out. I guess — from my officials — there was some damage. The project manager worked with the contractor and any damage has been fixed. The grand opening is still June 10, so it is all going ahead.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that.

Now, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Mayo reservoir. What is the status of the replacement of this reservoir? Are there any legal actions pending on it, and what is the cost for the new reservoir?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is a legal action pending against the contractor and the bonding company. The department is actually working through that process because of the failure. I met with the Village of Mayo a few times now on

this issue. I have seen it first-hand. It is, certainly, an issue for the community. It is unfortunate to have a brand new facility fail in this manner. Of course, we have worked with the municipality to get a stop-gap situation in place. I spoke with the Mayor of Mayo just this week about this issue. He is very happy to hear that we are proceeding with the new tender for this contract, a new tender to get a new facility built for the community of Mayo. I believe the cost is in the neighbourhood of about \$10 million in projected costs, but it hasn't been tendered yet. The tendering process is happening in the next coming weeks. We are going to have the facility rebuilt because it is an important one for Mayo. It is essential to make sure that they have a good source of water in that community.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that update. What is the status of the water delivery contract in Old Crow? Now, I believe it was tendered at one point, but I am not sure that it has been awarded — if the minister could provide us with an update, thank you.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is correct — we did tender the water delivery contract out. We received one outside bid; it was too high, and we cancelled that contract — cancelled that bid, because it was just too much money. Their staff has worked with the new executive director of the Vuntut Gwitchin government. We have offered two training sessions with Yukon University to assist in generating interest and skills for that job. The Vuntut Gwitchin government staff are currently delivering water in Old Crow, and we are working with the government of the Vuntut Gwitchin to make that a permanent service that that government offers. We will be looking at that over the coming year to 18 months.

Ms. McLeod: Again, I thank the minister for that update. Now, there was a commitment in the minister's mandate letter to continue efforts to revise the *Health Professions Act*. So, what does this mean, and what health professions are being revised?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, it's a good question, it's a timely question, and it's an important question for Yukoners. Work is currently underway to revise the *Health Professions Act* and improve how we regulate health care service professionals. This multi-year project will ensure a high standard of regulations in response to Yukon's unique needs and context. We are committed to improving the way in which health professions in the Yukon are regulated and, over time, increase coverage to additional professions, including psychologists. Regulation helps protect Yukoners by ensuring that health professionals are competent and safe to practise, as well as providing clear processes for dealing with complaints and disciplinary issues.

This is a very important piece of legislation. It's one that has been worked on for awhile now. We are trying to bring it to a conclusion so that we actually have good rules for our health professions. There are a whole range of health professions that would be covered by this: 12 health professions and an additional 11 non-health professions, totalling approximately 5,700 registrants a year. Only four of the 12 professions are regulated under the *Health Professions Act*, while the others have stand-alone acts.

Ms. McLeod: If I understand the minister — and perhaps he can clear this up for me — there are 12 professions within this *Health Professions Act* that are being reviewed. Can the minister confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question; it's a good one.

The Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs branch manages and supports registrants for 12 health professions and an additional 11 non-health professions, totalling approximately 5,700 registrants a year.

Only four of those 12 health professions are regulated under the *Health Professions Act*, while the others have stand-alone acts. There are also two other professions that are going to be brought into this process and that's the Yukon Registered Nurses Association and psychologists. That brings the total number of professions to 14.

Again, only four of the 12 are currently regulated under the *Health Professions Act* and the others have stand-alone acts, with the exception of psychologists who don't have any legislation around them at all, which has been the problem for a while.

The number of registrants varies. For example, denturists, psychiatric nurses, chiropractors, and midwives each have about 10 registrants, requiring the same support and resources as a larger profession, like licensed practical nurses, which has 225 registrants. Moving professions to a health professions framework is expected to bring more consistency to licensing and related processes, improving services to professionals, and bringing efficiencies for the regulator.

Policy and Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs branch worked with consultants to establish the gaps in the current legislation for regulated health professionals. The report was finalized last summer. Policy and Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs continue to determine options for addressing the gaps and improving the regulation of health professions in the Yukon. That is what we are doing; that work is underway.

The Yukon Registered Nurses Association is self-regulated currently, so we are going to bring them under the *Health Professions Act*. It is an option — sorry — it is an option that we will be looking at. We will give them that option, once the legislation is improved and made more efficient, so that we have — it will be like an umbrella piece of legislation that will then apply to all of these very diverse professions, all of which have their own — in many cases — have their own schools and regulatory bodies in other places in the country. We are trying to bring it so that we have some cohesion and meet the modern rules for practising under these professions. Currently, that is something where our gap analysis identified a problem.

Ms. McLeod: The minister made reference to this being a multi-year activity. Can the minister give us an idea of how many years this work will go on for, and if it takes a number of years, how does this affect those professions?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, first off — psychologists. That is a process that we have undertaken ahead of the *Health Professions Act* because currently, they are not at all regulated, so that is something we are fast-tracking, and that is taking

resources to do it. So, we made a decision to get some rules in place for psychologists, because they currently have none. So, that was an identified problem we have spoken about in this House, and that process is going to take until — is expected to take until 2025. That is the first shoe to drop.

We have done an assessment of the *Health Professions Act* and the gap analysis. We are working now to figure out next steps. We are making key decisions on what a new health professions regime will look like. Once that is done, we will be able to start bringing it to the drafting stage, which will take — well, at the drafting stage, we will actually be able to start talking to health professions about what we are proposing, getting — listening to — that feedback, and then start to get their ideas on what they would like to see, and then move forward.

It is going to take several years to do this. The first shoe to drop will be psychologists. That stage is outside of this bigger process. One of the things we were looking at is whether to include it in the broader process and just bring them in and do it all at once, or do something quicker for psychologists. We decided to put the resources to psychologists because it is important. We are doing that work, and then, in tandem to that — sort of parallel to that — we are working on the larger *Health Professions Act* review which is going to take several years.

That sort of gives you some indication about the work involved. It is still in its — I won't say its early stages, but it is still forming. Then we are going to have to go to the consultation stage, get more feedback from the professions themselves, and then we will start to do the policy work and drafting. So, it will be a several-year process.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that.

There was a move for the real estate profession to be a designated agency. Can the minister provide us an update on where this work is at?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Yukon Real Estate Association is working with Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs with Community Services to implement a new model of real estate agency that works for the benefit of all Yukoners.

The designated agency model will mean that a real estate agent is duty bound to represent the best interests of their client, whether their client is the buyer or the seller. This is a shift from the long-standing practice of seller agency or vendor agency in which the agent acts a subagent of the seller. In conjunction with the Yukon's licensing requirements for real estate agents, a designated agency model will allow better protections for the public and enhance trust and transparency. That work is underway. We were told that the designated agency model that the Yukon Real Estate Association was moving to would be in place by March 31, 2023. I have not yet heard whether that has happened. My officials are checking to see if that has actually happened but that was the target date that the Real Estate Association was looking at to do this. I will report back once I hear what has happened there.

Ms. McLeod: I have a question about green streets. The last time my colleague from Porter Creek Centre asked about this, the minister said that there was forthcoming

communication to residents. Can the minister tell us if that did happen? What was communicated to those residents?

While the minister is up, what will the Yukon government's role be in addressing the issues?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: First of all, the Yukon Real Estate Association did actually meet the deadline of March 31, so the new model has been adopted, apparently, by the Yukon Real Estate Association by the date they set.

As for the green streets, as I have said before, communicating with the residents is a municipal responsibility. They have told us that they were going to send letters out to all of the residents who purchased properties in the vicinity of the green streets area to inform them of the plan going forward, which was worked on by YG as the builder and the city as the planner — the one who came up with the plan for the green streets model. The green streets letter went out to owners yesterday, on April 19. That's the date of the letter that I have here. That outlines to residents what the plan is going forward. The plan is to actually adhere to the design that residents thought they were getting at the beginning, so the residents are getting exactly what they saw when they purchased the lots and the role of YG will be to actually do the construction work on those green streets for the City of Whitehorse.

Ms. McLeod: Can the minister tell us what the budget for that work is and when it will be tendered?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Now that we are working with the City of Whitehorse and having heard the residents' concerns about the affair — taking that into account and actually coming to a decision with the City of Whitehorse to deliver exactly what the city had designed in the first place — we are now finishing off the very detailed design of that plan. That contract will be let this summer. We will endeavour to get it done as soon as possible in terms of the work. As the tender has not yet been let, we don't know how much it is going to cost. My officials are actually looking to see what the proposed budget is. That is the plan going forward.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that but we are, of course, looking forward to hear what those budget numbers are.

Now, is the government on track to review the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that was required to begin in June as per the CASA? How long is this review anticipated to take and how will Yukoners be consulted?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to tell the House this afternoon that we do have a commitment out of the confidence and supply agreement with the Third Party to start a consultation and an actual retooling of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. The goal — the commitment, in fact, is to have that consultation and work to start the retooling of that act to begin in June. I am happy to tell the House that this is going to happen. As a matter of fact, the work on mapping out what the consultation will look like — how broad and deep it is — is currently underway with the Department of Community Services. I have been in touch with the landlord and tenant association and I will be reaching out to the Yukon Tenant's Association in the coming days. The consultation will be scheduled in June.

Ms. McLeod: Previously, the minister advised the House that this consultation could take years. Can the minister give us perhaps a better understanding of what that means?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: With the rewriting of legislation, it generally takes a minimum of 18 months to perform that work and then it could be longer. If you look at the *Motor Vehicles Act*, it has taken five years right now and it's still in process. Sometimes these things take many years; the minimum that it generally takes is 18 months. We're looking to have it done sooner rather than later.

Ms. McLeod: Is there any commitment on behalf of the department or the minister as to how long the consultation will be open for Yukoners to respond?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Before I begin my answer on the exciting and very important landlord and tenant act review, consultation, and drafting, I am going to ask the House's indulgence for an error that I made earlier today, and I am going to correct the record right now, as soon as I possibly can. I said to the member opposite — the Member for Watson Lake — that permits are through EMR. That is true; they are wood permits, but the burn permits are actually available through Community Services — my mistake, and I apologize to the member opposite and to the House. Burn permits can be obtained from Wildland Fire bases and municipalities from April 1 to September 30, and the good news is that an online system is in development, and we hope to have that up and running sometime this year. That will make things a little bit easier for folks, but the burn permits are available, starting April 1 through September 30, at fire bases and municipalities across the territory.

Thank you very much to the member opposite, and to the House, for that indulgence, and my apologies.

Now, as far as the consultation goes on the landlord and tenant act, I will say that we are starting a targeted engagement in June with stakeholders who know the legislation and are more deeply affected by it, and then we are going to move to a more public consultation — probably in early 2024, with the public, once we have identified some of the issues with the people who work with the legislation all the time. That would be landlord and tenant associations and others who work with it and who want to see changes to the act. We will start with the targeted consultation with people who know the industry well, and then we are going to move to more general, broader public consultation, once we have informed our direction through those targeted consultations early — starting in June.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that, and I really just have one more question before we turn it over to the Third Party.

Now, the minister mentioned that he met with the Mayor of Haines Junction recently. In fact, he mentioned that just today. Now, last time we were discussing Community Services in Committee, I asked about the letter that the mayor sent to the minister about phases 3 and 4 of the infrastructure project for that community. We answered — the minister answered about phase 3, but not about phase 4, so if the minister could give us an update on the status of phase 4, I would appreciate that.

Thank you — and I want to thank the officials for being here today and helping us out.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I didn't meet with, but I did speak with — it was a telephone conversation I had with the Mayor of Haines Junction earlier this week. We did talk about — the mayor did talk about phase 3. I assured him that the work on phase 3 is proceeding this summer. We did speak about it, and we expect that work to be done this year. The mayor was grateful for that answer and for the call.

As far as phase 4 goes, it is currently that the phase 4 is not budgeted, so we are going to have to work with the Village of Haines Junction to scope out and start with phase 4. We know it is important; we know it is a priority for the community; and we will be seeking funds to proceed with phase 4, but so far, we are waiting for news from Ottawa on the next infrastructure plans, and once we get that, we will be able to plan to go forward with phase 4 for the community of Haines Junction.

Ms. White: In the minister's mandate letter, there is the direction to continue to work with the Department of Health and Social Services on the review of the civil emergencies act. Can the minister give us an update on that work to date?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been mandated to do this. The review is underway, and it's expected to be completed by 2025.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. Will there be any public engagement in that review?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Currently, we are doing the policy work. Once that is done, we will scope out an engagement plan and that is typically done with pieces of legislation. We are not shy about consulting with both stakeholders and the Yukon public on such things, but currently, we are deep in the policy work.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I am sure people will have an interest to participate in that.

Also, in his mandate letter, under the climate change section, is a line that says, "Ensure infrastructure projects are considered through a climate lens."

Can the minister tell me what work is being done to ensure that projects are considered through a climate lens?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Currently, in the Government of Yukon, for infrastructure projects, a climate assessment is mandatory, with all our projects going through this, so we do a climate assessment on all our major infrastructure projects in the Government of Yukon now. I don't have the specifics of that, but it is fairly rigorous — it is important.

Ms. White: Where would we find that climate assessment? Where would we find documents or the scope of how those projects are assessed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is not in Community Services. It forms part of the application that we submit to the federal government as part of our Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. It is baked into that application process to the federal infrastructure funds. It is not a public-facing document.

Ms. White: Knowing that it is included in the minister's mandate letter, how are folks like me, or general Yukoners, supposed to find out how that works — ensuring that lens is used?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will direct the member opposite to the nation-leading *Our Clean Future* plan, which our government drafted. It is one of the — recognizes, as a leader in Canada, in terms of that plan, and it has reporting functions built into that plan, which are done on an annual basis, and that is where we report back to the Yukon public about how we are doing, in terms of meeting our targets, in terms of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, and making sure that our government is meeting the terms of that plan.

Ms. White: I couldn't have set it up better if I had asked myself. In *Our Clean Future*, in the report on H9, it says: "Assess ways to ensure Yukoners can access adequate insurance for fires, floods and permafrost thaw by 2023." So, that is the responsibility of the Department of Community Services and, in the most recent report, it says that it is in progress.

Can the minister update the House on where Community Services is on *Our Clean Future* commitment H9?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What we're talking about is de-risking for fires, floods — that type of thing. Our policy group is looking at the *Insurance Act* through a climate change lens, so we're looking at that. As well, at the federal-provincial-territorial tables recently — in December, I believe — I met with my federal counterpart in Ottawa.

I actually co-chaired the meeting that day with Saskatchewan and the federal government. The federal minister is working with provinces and territories and the Canadian insurance companies to de-risk people living in flood-prone areas, for example. So, the federal government is looking at perhaps a national insurance plan that will help people living in flood-prone areas and start to de-risk it — so, moving people out of those areas or putting measures in place, or providing insurance to people who are in those regions, that is what is happening at a federal level. Provinces and territories were amenable to this. We are working together to try to find ways to tackle this on a national level because all of us are seeing an incredible increase in the number of cases of floods and avalanches, and all of these climatic changes that we are seeing are having a profound effect on all of our jurisdictions.

The federal government can't believe the number of incidents this year over previous years. Even today, my colleague from Energy, Mines and Resources was talking about how the costs are five-fold and we are seeing this, so this is part of the work that we are doing to make sure that Canadians are safe and that they have insurance or are actually moved out of the riskier areas — lowlands and boreal forest areas in Canada that are subjected to fire and floods.

Ms. White: I appreciate that but, of course, when I am asking the questions, I am looking for a Yukon lens — it says "by 2023", so I look forward to more information on it.

Commitment H15 says: "Continue to conduct climate risk assessments of all major building products over \$10 million that are built or funded by the Government of Yukon."

Can the minister let us know how many of those climate assessments they expect to conduct this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: H15 does say: "Continue to conduct climate risk assessments of all major building projects over

\$10 million that are built or funded by the Government of Yukon." It is standard work within the Government of Yukon for the major projects that we actually fund and build in the territory. The department doesn't have that number at its fingertips but I will report back to the member opposite on how many projects we are looking at.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for repeating the word "continue", which I believe I read when I first read it off.

Now, interestingly enough, commitment C5 also talks about continuing to conduct detailed climate change risk assessments of all major community infrastructure projects over \$10 million that are built or funded by the Government of Yukon. So, I am curious — what are we looking at? How many projects are we talking about? I do look forward to getting that number.

Also, in *Our Clean Future* is commitment H19 — it says: "Provide low-interest financing to install biomass heating systems in commercial institutional buildings beginning in 2021." So, of course, it is in progress, and I wanted to know if there is a specific fund and the amount of that fund, or how many projects, for example, were funded last year and how many applications they are hoping for this year as far as getting biomass heating systems in commercial and industrial buildings?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is really a Highways and Public Works issue. I think the member opposite could probably direct the question to the Highways and Public Works minister who is doing a lot of the institutional work on biomass when he is back in the House with his department.

I can say that I do know that we have installed a new biomass heating system in the Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse and are expanding the heating systems of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre as well. I was part of that at the beginning and I know my colleague has taken on that work.

Biomass is a heating source that our government has done. I met with the biomass folks when I was Highways and Public Works minister a couple of years ago. It is a fledgling industry in the territory, made possible because of the rising fossil fuel prices. That industry, because of the carbon pricing that we are putting in place — that is actually making biomass a viable heating source in the territory and is helping that industry, so that's where it's coming from. My good colleague from Highways and Public Works is really the expert on the biomass industry here in the territory.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister's answer. Item H19 in *Our Clean Future* says: "Provide low-interest financing to install biomass heating systems in commercial and institutional buildings beginning in 2021." The department responsible is Community Services so that's why I asked the question. Maybe the minister can confer with his colleagues and make sure that the updated *Our Clean Future* has the correct department on it. There looks to be information coming from the officials so I will just wait for that answer.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, I thank the member opposite for the question because it is important. Where Community Services gets involved in biomass is as a component of the Better Buildings program, so the Better Buildings program,

which the member opposite and I worked on, got through the House and has now been signed on to by all municipalities in the territory — all municipalities in the territory have signed on to it by now — so that work is beginning. It's a fledgling program, of course. We are starting to get applications under that program but it is only just beginning.

Through that program, people can apply to have biomass installed in their commercial property. I don't have any information on how many people have actually come forward through the Better Buildings program to install biomass in their commercial properties. As of March 22, we have had 29 applications under the Better Buildings program. More of this data will come in and, of course, we will report through the nation-leading *Our Clean Future* plan. But, at the moment, it's a fledgling number of applications that we have had under the Community Services Better Buildings program and I don't have the information at hand as to how many of those are biomass.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for the conversation over the preceding days. I would like to point out that the voluntary psychologist registry now has five psychologists, which is up from two on April 11. Again, I thank the people in the department who listened to local psychologists and made that wording change. It's a big deal.

I thank the officials who are in the House and I thank the folks who are in the department, sending in the answers. I have an interest in moving on so I thank the minister for the time today.

Mr. Dixon: I have one brief, quick question for the minister. It's about the Dawson City rec centre. I would just like to get some clarity based on some questions that were asked previously.

The five-year capital plan includes up to \$73 million for that project. The budget that was passed by the City of Dawson suggested that it was \$75.3 million. I am just wondering how that gap will be filled, and what is the breakdown between the territorial government funding versus ICIP funding on this project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I was just in conversation with the City of Dawson this week. As a matter of fact, I was talking to Mayor Kendrick about affairs in Dawson. He did talk about the rec centre. I am very happy to hear that Dawson has chosen a way forward for the Dawson City rec centre. This has been something that the community of Dawson has been waiting a very, very long time for. There have been fits and starts. There have been sod-turnings — faux sod-turnings. There have been promises made and then, five years later, promises broken.

I am happy to say that we are moving forward with this. The five-year capital plan does lay out estimated costs. We are going to put those to tender. Preliminary schematic options have been completed and discussed by Dawson council. More work will be done to refine those options to fit into the existing budget and to ensure that operating costs will be managed by the municipality. Now that Dawson has indicated where it wants to go, we will work with the City of Dawson to refine

and bring those plans to life, to meet the needs of both the City of Dawson and ourselves, so that work will commence.

As far as the ICIP funding, we are working actually with our federal partners to see exactly how much ICIP money and how it will be allocated. That work has not yet been finalized by this Cabinet.

Mr. Dixon: Just one point of clarification — so, the minister has said previously that the ICIP funding is completely allocated — at least the amount for Yukon is completely allocated overall. So, my question was just about how much — if it is completely allocated, we know where all the current ICIP funding is going. My question is, just how much has been allocated for the Dawson recreation centre so far?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to talk about the Dawson City recreation centre and answer questions on this project that we are fulfilling the needs of the community of Dawson, which have been long-promised and not delivered by past governments. We have been working very diligently for the past several years to make sure that this project happens. I had expected only one question, but I am happy to answer any ancillary questions that we have this afternoon.

We have notionally applied — allocated — \$20 million through ICIP to the project. No, we haven't, because we haven't had a project identified by the City of Dawson — we now have — so we will be working with the federal government on that and seeing what funds we can get from the federal government for this project in Dawson City.

Mr. Dixon: The minister will be seeking further funding from the federal government on top of the \$20 million of ICIP?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Third question — happy to answer it this afternoon. Of course, we are always going to be looking for money from the federal government. We are in a dynamic situation in terms of ICIP and the Investing in Canada infrastructure fund. All the funds have been allocated. Dawson was allocated \$20 million. We are going to work with the federal government to find as much money as we can to fund infrastructure projects in Yukon for citizens of the territory.

Ms. White: I apologize; I had said I was done but my office was just contacted by someone living in Silver City with concerns that there is no phone service in that community. They said that more people are living there and they had to drive to Destruction Bay; it is an issue of safety. I am unsure, but is the minister's department responsible for rural phone connectivity?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am glad that we are such an interesting department. I am happy to answer such questions all afternoon. I love doing this.

Thank you very much for the next question and it was about rural phone connectivity. That would probably fall under my good colleague in Highways and Public Works.

But I was not aware of the connectivity issue in Silver City. Now we are and I am sure we will take that under advisement.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all

lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

**Unanimous consent re all lines in Vote 51,
Department of Community Services, cleared or
carried**

Deputy Chair: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$95,634,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$100,877,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$196,511,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Department of Environment

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome, to my left, the Deputy Minister of Environment, Manon Moreau, and to my right, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment Shehnaz Ali.

Today, I stand before this Assembly as Minister of Environment to give an update on our government's work to protect our natural environment, the natural world, and to create a resilient, thriving territory. The Yukon is home to vast landscapes, beautiful waterways, and vibrant wildlife. For generations, Yukon First Nations and Yukoners have depended on the health of our territory's environment for their livelihood, quality of life, and enjoyment.

The Yukon's Department of Environment works every day to ensure that our territory has a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous future. We do this work so that future generations

of Yukoners inherit a healthy home, and to protect our fish and waters, wildlife and their habitats, and our air, lands, and climate. The Yukon is a jurisdiction that is leading the country on climate change initiatives, protecting biodiversity, and managing natural resources in a responsible way. The work that the Department of Environment does every day — whether it be by our hydrologists, parks staff, conservation officers, scientists, or biologists — contributes to our success as a territory.

I want to take a moment now to talk about how the Government of Yukon is supporting that critical work.

The 2023-24 main estimates for the Department of Environment capital and operation and maintenance budget is approximately \$61.4 million. That is 18.5 percent more than the previous 2022-23 estimate. The operation and maintenance budget is approximately \$57.4 million. This is an increase of over \$9.5 million from the 2022-23 estimate. I will get into the details on that, but it is primarily due to the signing of the bilateral nature agreement.

The capital estimate is just over \$4 million, an increase of \$47,000 from the 2022-23 estimate. In 2023-24, we expect to collect just under \$14 million in recoveries and revenue. This includes approximately \$11.5 million of recoveries from the Government of Canada. This fiscal year, 2023-24, we have capital recoveries of \$638,000.

Through our partnership with the Government of Canada and our continued advocacy at the national level for northern and Yukon priorities, we have been able to gain funding as a territory to advance our initiatives with little or no impact on the Yukon's fiscal framework. In fact, this year's budget for the Department of Environment is over 22-percent recoverable, as opposed to last year's, which was just over nine-percent recoverable. This year's large recoveries are a direct result of the dedicated work of the Department of Environment to secure federal funding and advance important initiatives to protect our environment and create a more sustainable territory.

I would like to now talk about how these funds are being spent and how it will improve the lives of Yukoners while creating a more sustainable home. The biggest challenge this generation faces is climate change. Climate change is having unique impacts in the north. It is affecting our water, our land, our air, and the places we call home. Climate change can cause more frequent and extreme weather events, such as wildfires, floods, and landslides that we need to prepare for.

Last September, our government released the first Yukon-wide climate risk and resilience assessment report, which evaluated climate change impacts that pose a risk to Yukoners. The report provided recommendations to address seven priority areas that emerged from the assessment, which are: extreme weather and precipitation events that threaten transportation infrastructure; floods and fires that impact communities and livelihoods; permafrost thaw that affects communities, infrastructure, and land access; changing climate conditions that impact land, water, animals, and plants; changing conditions on the land that threaten safety and access, culture and heritage, and livelihoods; climate change impacts that

affect health and well-being; and risks, in general, to the Yukon's economy.

Over the coming years, our territory will continue to work with Yukon First Nations and community partners to address these priority areas and to strengthen the resiliency of Yukon communities.

In 2020, the Yukon government released *Our Clean Future*, a 10-year strategy that guides our territory's continued response to climate change through four key goals: (1) reducing the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions with a target of reducing the Yukon's emissions by 45 percent below 2010 levels by 2030; (2) ensuring that Yukoners have access to reliable, affordable, and renewable energy; (3) adapting to the impacts of climate change; and (4) building a greener economy.

In 2023-24, the Government of Yukon will invest nearly \$60 million to address the climate crisis. *Our Clean Future* includes over 130 actions to help us reach these goals and a lot of that work is already underway, in progress, or complete.

This year, we will continue to invest in reducing emissions for transportation, increasing our renewable energy capacity, ensuring that our homes and buildings are energy efficient and resilient to climate change, and strengthening our understanding of climate risks and how to respond to them.

Last year, we reduced the second *Our Clean Future* annual report that provides Yukoners with an update on our progress.

Key actions completed in 2021 included the removal of single-use plastic bags, and now paper bags, from circulation in the territory, a decline in emissions between 2019 and 2020, and doubling the number of zero-emission vehicles registered in the territory. We look forward to providing, in the coming months, an update on our progress in 2022.

Deputy Chair, *Our Clean Future* is guiding our territory to a cleaner and more sustainable future by shaping the way we make decisions today which will impact future generations of Yukoners the most.

We have developed guidance for departments to use when making policy, program, and project decisions that consider climate change. In addition, our territory continues to meet the requirement of Infrastructure Canada to complete climate risk and emissions assessments on all major infrastructure projects in the territory.

Deputy Chair, we know that we cannot meet our ambitious goals alone. That is why we assembled the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, which is made up of 11 people who represent the diversity of perspectives and expertise to support our efforts. The Yukon Climate Leadership Council has submitted their *Climate Shot 2030* report which is helping to guide our continued response to the climate change emergency that our government declared in 2019. We will consider how to integrate these recommendations from the council into *Our Clean Future* actions.

I thank the council for their passion, dedication, and willingness to support the Yukon in meeting our climate goals. The decisions we make today will impact future generations of Yukoners the most.

In 2021, we assembled the first Youth Panel on Climate Change, which included 12 youth who delivered *Our*

Recommendations, Our Future: 27 Programs and Policies to Embolden the Yukon's Climate Action with the goal of strengthening our actions laid out in *Our Clean Future*. In 2022, the second Youth Panel on Climate Change cohort included 10 panelists who built on the first cohort's ambitions through capacity- and leadership-building activities.

The Yukon government partnered with BYTE — Empowering Youth Society for the second year in a row to run the youth panel and report to the government on its activities. Based on the experience of the youth panels, we look forward to working on meaningful ways to continue to build youth capacity and leadership on climate change in the Yukon.

Deputy Chair, I am proud to announce that this budget includes \$127,000, which is 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada, to hire a climate change scientist. Their work will help us to better interpret climate data in the Yukon, develop and coordinate climate change initiatives and programs, as well as represent our territory at national climate change working groups in order to advocate for northern-specific climate change initiatives.

The Member for Whitehorse Centre has had some questions regarding renewable fuels. We are continuing to support the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to develop renewable fuel standards in the Yukon and plan to pursue a pilot program to confirm the viability of renewable diesel and gasoline in the territory. Renewable fuels will play a critical role in meeting our net zero targets, and I look forward to our continued shared work with Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as the Government of Canada, to advance clean fuel standards.

Our changing environment and an increase in severe weather events has resulted in significant flooding events in the Yukon over the past few years. We know that this flooding is due to climate change, permafrost thaw, increased precipitation, and snowpack. One of the key actions under *Our Clean Future* is to develop flood maps for flood-prone communities across the territory to identify flood hazards and help mitigate flood impacts to property, infrastructure, and public safety. Flood maps are critical tools used for emergency response and coordination, better understanding climate change impacts, and assisting with community land and infrastructure planning.

Over the next 10 years, the Government of Yukon will produce flood maps for 14 flood-prone Yukon communities across our territory. This work will happen in four phases, with the first draft maps anticipated to be released for the Southern Lakes communities in 2023. This year's main estimate includes over \$700,000, with \$475,000 being recoverable through the Government of Canada, to continue this critical work that will inform how we prepare, respond, and mitigate flooding in our most at-risk communities. Through our strong partnership with the federal government, we will be able to recover \$300,000 of that funding from Natural Resources Canada.

Once created, flood maps will be publicly available and accessible to anyone, including governments and property owners. Due to a changing climate, we know that the water

table across the Yukon is rising and is presenting challenges to our communities and public infrastructure.

For example, the Member for Klune raised a concern with respect to the buildup of ice under the Dezadeash bridge in Haines Junction. Alongside Community Services, we will continue to monitor the situation throughout the spring.

Through the flood mapping advisory committee, we have set criteria to prioritize the rollout of flood hazard mapping across the territory. Currently, our flood mapping plans do not include Haines Junction at this time, as the community has had historically low flood risk; however, as we continue to do flood mapping work across the Yukon, we will continue to monitor water conditions in all Yukon communities and consider producing additional flood maps for communities, where needed.

Through *Our Clean Future*, we are also taking action to reduce our territory's waste and its impact on the environment. One of the ways we are doing this is by creating a sustainable recycling program. Recently, we saw how vulnerable the Yukon's recycling system is when Raven Recycling announced that they would be stopping public recycling drop-off this upcoming December. Over the coming months, our government will continue to work closely with the City of Whitehorse and processors to support them in finding short- and long-term solutions for non-refundable recycling services in Whitehorse.

We know that Yukoners do want to do their part in diverting waste. In fact, in 2020, Yukoners diverted 25 percent of their waste and 26 percent in 2021. The onus of waste diversion should not just fall on the shoulders of Yukoners but also on producers and companies that are creating it. In the coming years, the Yukon government will implement extended producer responsibility — a proven method that transfers the high cost of recycling from local processors and governments to the producers or importers of products. This incentivizes producers to find innovative solutions in developing products that create less waste throughout their lifecycle.

Our Clean Future commits the Yukon to implement extended producer responsibility — also known as EPR — by 2025, as part of an effort to increase waste diversion to 40 percent by 2030. The budget for EPR includes more than \$160,000 to begin the process of implementation, which will guide our territory's waste reduction for generations to come.

We have just finished wrapping up a four-month public engagement on EPR where the feedback we gained will help us implement this new system in a responsible way, such as recognizing the need for a small-business exemption. I look forward to seeing our territory implement EPR in the coming years to help us reach our waste reduction targets and to contribute to protecting the Yukon's environment.

Deputy Chair, I look forward to continuing sharing the story of the great work that the Department of Environment is doing across this territory in various areas and continuing that discussion next week. However, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale North that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes 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 Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

The following document was filed April 20, 2023:

35-1-150

Fleet Vehicle Agency Business Plan 2023 to 2026
(Clarke, N.)