



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 158

1<sup>st</sup> Session

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2023 Fall 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**

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
<b>Hon. Ranj Pillai</b>	Porter Creek South	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
<b>Hon. Jeanie McLean</b>	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
<b>Hon. Nils Clarke</b>	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
<b>Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee</b>	Riverdale South	Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
<b>Hon. Richard Mostyn</b>	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
<b>Hon. John Streicker</b>	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
<b>Hon. Sandy Silver</b>	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

<b>Currie Dixon</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	<b>Scott Kent</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
<b>Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake
<b>Yvonne Clarke</b>	Porter Creek Centre	<b>Geraldine Van Bibber</b>	Porter Creek North
<b>Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Kate White</b>	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
<b>Lane Tredger</b>	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
<b>Annie Blake</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Wednesday, November 15, 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:** Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of guests here today for several tributes.

I will ask us to welcome a few of the folks. First of all, Jason Cook is here from the Porter Creek Secondary School's Gender and Sexuality Alliance. We also have with us, from Yukon Brewing, Al Hansen and Bob Baxter. We have Anne Middler of the Kicksled Revolution and Anne's daughter, Juniper Middler, who, by the way, is featured in a show at Haa Shagóon Hídi right now on trapping. It's on, I think, until December 22. If you go down to Carcross, please make sure to check it out.

Could we please welcome them all?

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to help me welcome a few visitors who we have here today for one of the tributes that's going to be given.

Could we please welcome Jill Nash, Araica McPhee — particularly, I think Araica McPhee will be a great welcome — Marney Paradis, April Howard, and Donna Jones.

Thank you for being here.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to join me in welcoming people who are near and dear to someone we are tributing today. I am so grateful that you are here. We have Peggy Hanifan, Lisa Vollans-Leduc, Maralyn Rogers, Christine Withers, Stu Withers, Jessen Cardiff — thank you for coming — Haley Cardiff — the smallest, little visitor — and Jaclyn Cardiff. We have Helen Flaherty, Helene Dobrowolsky, Max Fraser, Barry Jenkins, and Sidney Maddison.

Thank you for joining us today.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In remembrance of Kathy Hanifan

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Liberals to honour the life and legacy of Kathy Hanifan. Kathy was a mother, a sister, a grandmother, great-grandmother, teacher, mentor, activist, and a friend. She

was born on March 21, 1948 in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, and soon after, the family moved to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Her Ontario years were full of family and growing into an independent woman who loved adventure. At the tender age of 24, her love and adventure brought her to Faro, and this was the beginning of her 50-year love affair with the Yukon, living in Carmacks and Dawson City before finally settling in Whitehorse.

When Kathy moved to Whitehorse in the early 1970s, she took on a variety of jobs to support her family — everything from selling hunting rifles at Igloo Sporting Goods to greeting late-night arrivals at the Greyhound bus station. Many a time, she came home with exhausted travellers who had no other place to stay.

Her work with the Yukon government's Finance department led to her involvement with the Yukon Employees' Union. She championed Yukon government workers as a member of the YEU executive and then later worked for the union as a service officer for over 20 years. A colleague, friend, and neighbour who worked across from Kathy for many years on the employer side remembers her strong sense of compassion and desire for workplace justice. She said that Kathy always saw the person behind the claim and tried to present her cases as people first and alleged policy or contract violation second.

Kathy was not shy to advocate for people even when she knew and knew that the employer knew that there was no violation on paper. Kathy just wanted to make sure that people's working lives were better, and she put her heart into everything and everything into it.

Kathy was also one of the long-time mainstays of the Yukon NDP. She served three terms as president and managed Yukon and federal election campaigns for various candidates. She worked on many campaigns — always with enthusiasm, always willing to lend a hand, and always with the advice that made sense.

When the Yukon NDP won the territorial election in 1996, Kathy became the executive assistant to Lois Moorcroft, minister of the departments of Education and Justice. As the executive assistant to the Justice minister, she was known to many at the Justice department to be a person whom they could count on to champion their perspectives when needed.

Kathy put her time where her heart lay and volunteered on various boards. Some highlights included serving as the labour representative on the Employment Standards Board and as a founding member and chair of the Yukon Child Care Board. Her sound judgment and clear thinking were tremendous assets to the Employment Standards Board and to the parties that came before it. In her time on the board, she was instrumental in working with other non-worker reps to get their concurrence for a recommendation to increase minimum wage. She was proud of where we landed with minimum wage after the last election but always encouraged me to continue to work at closing the gap between minimum wage and a living wage.

Kathy was a mother who translated her care for her sons into activism toward the formation of the Yukon Child Care Board, child care standards, and served for the not-for-profit

daycare board of the day. Her work on the Child Care Board saw incredible changes over the years, but even with increases to childcare subsidies, she was always intent on the principle of universal childcare and was relieved that, even decades after her time when it would have helped her directly, universal childcare was finally adopted in the Yukon.

Kathy was a fierce advocate of the underdog — all of them — workers who were mistreated, people without resources, women who struggled, and new Canadians. She was always interested in discussing social issues and how to resolve them.

Kathy had a tremendous gift for friendship, with many meaningful friendships that spanned decades. She connected with such a variety of people. She valued people for what she saw at their core and it didn't matter where they came from or what work they did. She helped so many people, from providing a bed to finding the words to get them through rough times and inspiring them to be their best selves.

Her legacy is the three fine men she raised, the institutions for which she worked and volunteered, making them better in the process, and the many, many people who will cherish her memory.

Kathy taught us so much about love, life, and the power of going out on her own terms. She was tough as nails and soft as a teddy bear. She loved her boys, her family, and her dear friends more than anything. Kathy was a warrior straight to the end, and I would be remiss if I didn't close with some words that she lived by and what she said to many of us when the fight was wearing us down and what I know she would say today to those who are here for the T1D Support Network and, of course, those representing the Porter Creek GSA.

This is what she would part us with. She said, "Don't let the bastards get you down."

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to my friend Katherine Hanifan. Kathy and I go back to being co-workers in the Yukon Department of Finance. As the years passed, we grew closer and kept up with family goings-on and our ups and downs. We shared many stories about the various communities where she had lived and what our latest ventures involved.

She was always volunteering, as was I but with different interests. My family started a summer tourism business and my focus changed. I worked casual in the winter, as the government refused to consider a job share of 6 months-6 months. Kathy wanted to work summers and I wanted to work winters.

We were women who wanted to make a change, but it was a firm no — not like today where accommodation is an accepted part of the work world. Kathy was employed for 20 years with the Yukon Employees' Union as a service officer and so enjoyed the work that she accomplished there. She was passionate about her beliefs and always greeted you with the biggest smile and hug. She enjoyed being in the thick of politics, elections, and campaigns.

We didn't see each other often, and that is a regret I have, as when I heard of her passing, it was far too soon and unexpected. We were going to have lunch soon. So, whatever

happens, take those moments and go for that lunch. Kathy's sister, Peggy, had a wonderful idea. She invited Kathy's friends to come and pick a small memento to have as a memory. I chose a small, blue, antique trinket box that I treasure. I left Peggy and the family with a memory of mine. In a note I wrote — quote: "When I was sworn in as Commissioner, I gave tribute to my strong women friends who helped me accomplish what I had done to that date, and Kathy was on that list."

Thankfully, Kathy was there in person at my swearing-in ceremony, and she was very surprised, but we had that special bond. Rest well, my friend. You are missed.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of 2023 Hall of Innovators Awards**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberals and the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the 2023 Hall of Innovators Award recipients. The Hall of Innovators Award, presented by YuKconstruct, took place last Thursday on November 9. The night honoured individuals who are exceptional examples of innovation and leadership.

Innovative programs and projects enrich our communities and play an impactful role on the ongoing economic, social, cultural, and technological aspects of life in the Yukon. I was fortunate to attend the gala and was humbled to be surrounded by such accomplished and inspiring individuals and was able to share in the experiences of the recipients being presented their awards by the Premier.

Today, we take a moment to pay tribute to all recipients whose valuable contributions enrich the lives of Yukoners.

I want to start by acknowledging the Porter Creek Secondary School Gender and Sexuality Alliance, winner of the Youth Innovator Award. They have harnessed the transformative power of youth to champion safety, equality, and acceptance for all students in the Yukon, particularly 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Their impact extends beyond school walls, identifying and bridging policy gaps, leading to critical reforms that safeguard vulnerable youth.

I would also like to recognize Notable Innovator Award winners Anne Midler and Joella Hogan. In 2016, Anne brought the magic of kick-sleds to the Yukon with the kick-sled revolution. Anne's dream to evolve this initiative to a pan-northern social enterprise addressing climate change, health promotion, and bringing positive change to our territory is well on its way.

Joella Hogan, whose dedication to enhancing community through her business endeavours, resonates with Mayo's residents and visitors and beyond. Yukon Soaps has become a testament to the revival of ancestral practices, with every soap embodying a unique and captivating Yukon story.

I also want to celebrate the three recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award. Rich Thompson, who continually pushes the boundaries of innovation with his business and fosters environments where others can thrive creatively, and Bob and Alan Hansen, with their unwavering entrepreneurial spirit, became the driving force behind Yukon Brewing's success.

I also want to acknowledge the dedicated effort of the selection committee for the 2023 Yukon Innovation Awards

and express deep gratitude to the lead sponsor of the event, Yukon Brewing, for their generous support.

Innovation paves the way for progress, offers fresh avenues to realize our aspirations, and writes the Yukon story. The Government of Yukon is proud to be supporting this wonderful community through the new innovation strategy, which was launched at the Yukon Hall of Innovators Award Gala. I am confident that the 2023 Hall of Innovators Award recipients will continue to make the Yukon a better place to live, work, and learn.

*Applause*

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to add our congratulations to the winners of the Yukon Hall of Innovators Award. As has been noted, the Porter Creek Secondary School Gender and Sexuality Alliance received the Youth/Emerging Leaders Notable Innovators Award. A Notable Innovators Award went to Joella Hogan and her Yukon Soaps Company and to Anne Midler of Kicksled Revolution and the Lifetime Achievement Award to Yukon Brewing's Bob Baxter and Al Hansen, as well as to Rich Thompson, with Northern Vision Development.

I would like to offer our sincere congratulations to each of these winners and to thank them for their work, dedication to their communities, and, of course, for their innovation.

*Applause*

### In recognition of World Diabetes Day

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to recognize that yesterday was World Diabetes Day. It is a day to raise awareness about the increasing health concerns associated with all types of diabetes. It is also a day to promote the importance of taking coordinated and concerted action to prevent, diagnose, and treat diabetes and all of its complications.

This year's theme is "Access to diabetes care", and I want to thank the dedicated staff at the Department of Health and Social Services and the T1D Support Network, who have been working together to implement a territory-wide T1D diabetes strategy. The strategy will address areas of management; treatment and care; data collection; learning and knowledge sharing; access to devices; medicines; and other supports.

The Government of Yukon has also partnered with the T1D Support Network and piloted a project to provide continuous glucose monitors to Yukoners with type 1 diabetes. With this successful pilot, the Yukon is the first in Canada to provide continuous glucose monitors for all individuals with type 1 diabetes and to offer financial support to cover the costs of their preferred glucose monitor device. Thank you to everyone who has had a hand in continuing to provide services to those living with diabetes.

The Yukon government's chronic condition support program offers one-on-one education, group education, and support programs. They empower clients to self-manage and live their best life through education and accessible support services. As of 2020, there are approximately 3,182 Yukoners living with either type 1 or type 2 diabetes here. Today, we take

this opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of those in the Yukon who are living with diabetes, as well as the health professionals, researchers, advocates, supporters, and organizations working to improve the lives of people with diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an opportunity for us to recognize all those who work so hard to bring awareness and progress in the fight against diabetes. To all of you, we say thank you.

*Applause*

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition and the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to World Diabetes Day, which is commemorated every year on November 14 to coincide with the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922. The campaign is focused on access to diabetes care and is the largest for diabetes awareness, and it is expected to reach a global audience of over one billion people in 160 countries.

According to the International Diabetes Federation — I'll quote: "1 in 10 adults worldwide have diabetes. Over 90% have type 2 diabetes. Close to half are not yet diagnosed.

"In many cases, type 2 diabetes and its complications can be delayed or prevented by adopting and maintaining healthy habits ... knowing your risk and what to do is important to support prevention, early diagnosis and timely treatment."

Of course, type 1 diabetes is a different story, as people cannot simply make lifestyle choices to prevent it. Here in the Yukon, we are fortunate to have a group of very dedicated volunteers advocating for individuals and their families living with type 1 diabetes. The Yukon T1D Support Network was able to successfully lobby the Yukon government to provide continuous glucose monitors to every Yukoner with type 1 diabetes. This has been a game changer for so many people, as their health is easier to monitor and their quality of life has improved substantially.

The organization continues to work collaboratively on completing a T1D strategy for Yukon, hosting camps for young Yukoners with the disease, and providing a scholarship to Yukoners in the name of the late Rebecca Pollard.

We're also lucky to have the individuals at the Diabetes Education Centre in Whitehorse General Hospital. They offer teaching and ongoing support to those with type 1, type 2, gestational, and pre-diabetes. This is a very valuable service for Yukoners and those living in northern BC.

Mr. Speaker, five years ago, I read out the T1D footprint for one of my young constituents, Heidi Nash. Her mom, Jill, who is here with us today, has provided me with her current footprint to share here today so that people can truly understand what it takes to manage this disease. At that time in 2018, Heidi had been living with type 1 diabetes for 2,430 days. She has now been living with the disease for 3,174 days. She has endured 11,412 finger pricks and 22,218 insulin injections. She has lost the equivalent of 1,812 hours of sleep to T1D, although Jill told me that this number is a little bit low. She has spent 906 hours recovering from hypoglycemia. I think for anyone, these numbers are unbelievable, but for these folks, it's a normal part of their routine.

For all the families living with diabetes, we salute you and we thank you for your ongoing efforts to help those affected by this disease.

*Applause*

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

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I have tabling two legislative returns: one in response to questions from the Member for Copperbelt South and one in response to questions from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter addressed to the Minister of Justice and Health and Social Services from me. It is dated May 2, 2023 and it has not yet been responded to.

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

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the newly elected Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

(1) since the Office of the Auditor General of Canada has confirmed that they have received the Yukon government's Public Accounts for the 2022-23 fiscal year; and

(2) the Minister of Finance has been in violation of the *Financial Administration Act* since failing to table the Public Accounts on the legally mandated date of October 31, he should immediately table the Public Accounts for 2022-23 in the Legislative Assembly.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to create and enact accessibility legislation based on the *Accessible Canada Act*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to start planning now for future educational reserves within the City of Whitehorse.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation development corporations to create housing units in communities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a remote work policy to encourage and support Yukon government employees to work remotely from Yukon communities where operationally feasible.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?  
This then brings us to Question Period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### Question re: Diesel energy generation costs

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, on November 8 last year, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said this — quote: "... the Yukon Party believes that we should have an investment in fossil fuels that we will have to have for the long term — no. We are going to work to get off the fossil fuels." Since making that statement, the Yukon Energy Corporation has revealed that this government is spending at least \$49 million this year on new, permanent diesel generators in three Yukon communities.

So, will the minister acknowledge that the amount that they are spending on new, permanent diesel generators dwarfs the amount that this government has spent on renewables this year?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon has an islanded electrical grid. That grid requires, in order to make sure that we have affordable and reliable energy and clean energy, that what we do is have backup energy. That is for when we have blackouts. It is the responsible thing.

We will always continue to have those investments in fossil fuels, thermal backup, for our system. Yes, we will continue to invest in that and that is to be expected.

As well, we are growing, we have increasing energy demands, and we are trying to shift off of fossil fuels broadly. The way we will do that is to invest in renewables.

Over the short term, we may need to invest in some fossil fuels. That is why sometimes there will be rentals. I will continue to say that we should be careful not to invest in the long term for the growth of our system in fossil fuels because we want to shift off of fossil fuels.

That is the broad picture for Yukoners, and the Yukon Party is saying that we should invest in fossil fuels.

**Mr. Dixon:** It is the Liberals who are investing \$49 million this year in fossil fuels. For years now, the Liberals have been telling Yukoners that it makes more financial sense to rent diesel generators than it would to construct a permanent facility. When they first announced their decision to rent diesels, the Premier even said — quote: "We believe it's a good investment." Well, last week, the Yukon Energy Corporation told us that they're not so sure. In fact, they told us that they have hired a consultant to look at this — quote: "... the scope of work that Colliers is doing for us is basically doing that analysis on the financial metrics around renting versus owning over different time periods so that we can be sure that the costs of renting and the costs of owning are known to us when making decisions."

Does the minister stand by the Premier's assertion that renting is a better investment than owning?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite keeps referring to it as the Liberals being the ones doing this, but it was the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation who sat in this House as a witness and said that it was 20 percent cheaper to rent than buy.

Okay, but those numbers do change over time and I think it is important to keep watching those numbers. At that point in time, it was cheaper for Yukoners to rent than buy. It is not me saying it; it is the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation who has said that. The members opposite were here; they heard that. They never reference it, but they just continue to say that it's wrong. That's fine — they don't believe the Energy Corporation.

The point is that we think that it's important to continue to do the diligence on this work, so I support the Yukon Energy Corporation doing that diligence on behalf of Yukoners.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, they are doing that work because they know that they need to provide an analysis of whether it makes sense to continue to rent because, quite frankly, most Yukoners don't think that's the case.

According to the Energy Corporation last week, the current dependable capacity gap for Yukon is 37 megawatts. Yukon's peak demand for electricity is forecast by YEC to grow by 36 percent between now and 2030. As it stands, there are zero projects on the books of any kind that can meet that demand. This means that unless something changes, we will need to rent dozens of diesel generators for decades. Wind and solar projects are great and we support them, but they do not provide dependable capacity.

When will the Liberals admit that renting diesel generators for decades just doesn't make sense?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I will continue to listen to the Yukon Energy Corporation and the analysis that they do when they present it to me. I have always said to them to do the smart thing for Yukoners. We need to make sure that our electricity is affordable, reliable, and clean. So, if the best approach for capacity is to purchase thermal, to build a diesel plant — okay. If the best approach is to rent those diesels — okay.

But all of this belies the bigger conversation that we need to have as Yukoners, which is: How are we transitioning off of fossil fuels?

The Yukon Party's idea is to just build more diesel plants. What we will be doing with that over the long term is paying fossil fuel companies. That's not what we want to do. I think that we should create more energy systems here in the Yukon through partnerships with First Nations and even through partnerships with Yukoners so that we get more renewables here.

By the way, if you invest in wind and battery, suddenly you get firmer baseload power, so that's the sort of approach that we will continue to look for. We do not believe that the future is fossil fuels.

### Question re: Energy strategy effect on greenhouse gas emissions

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, in 2020, the Yukon Energy Corporation released a 10-year renewable energy strategy, which was planned to help Yukon meet its greenhouse gas emission target of a 30-percent reduction from 2010 levels by 2030. Since that time, we have seen the Yukon Liberals increase the targets to 45 percent and actually put those targets down in law. We have seen just about every project in that renewable energy plan either delayed, stalled out, or completely dead in the water. In fact, just a few years into the plan, the Yukon Energy Corporation has announced that it needs to be completely overhauled.

Can the minister tell us if indeed, with all the current projects committed to, we are on track to meet the legislated target of a 45-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the Thäy T'äw wind project on Haeckel Hill is not dead in the water. In fact, the ribbon was just cut. The battery project is delayed by about a year, but the project is happening right now. We have seen delays with the Atlin project, but we will continue to work on every one of these renewable energy projects and we will continue to investigate for further energy projects.

By the way, at the Premier's suggestion about a year ago or just under a year ago, we are also starting to investigate how we can connect the Yukon's grid to BC's grid, and that would give us ample supply of energy. Yes, it would take a decade to do that work, but that would give us the needed supply, that would assist us in the energy transition, and that would help us reach our 45-percent target.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, by the Yukon Energy Corporation's own admission, the delay in the projects outlined in the renewable energy strategy would make meeting the 30-percent target by 2030 impossible. Now the Liberals have increased that target to 45 percent, even though there are currently no actual projects that will help achieve that goal.

I'm going to move on to electric vehicles. The *Clean Energy Act* commits that, within about six years from now, 30 percent of vehicles sold in Yukon will be zero emission and the Yukon government wants 4,800 electric vehicles on the road by 2030. We are currently nowhere near that goal.

Will the minister confirm whether or not we are on pace to meet that legislated goal?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, actually, the last time I looked at the statistics, the Yukon was third per capita in Canada in terms of electric vehicle uptake, and there was an event just recently — a couple of weekends ago — held at the Transportation Museum where dealerships here brought their electric vehicles to show to the public. So, the uptake has been strong. We don't expect it to be a linear curve. We have incentives out there for Yukoners, and that will help to accelerate things.

By the way, we should also acknowledge that we just hit a milestone with electric bicycles. I think we just had our 1,000<sup>th</sup>

rebate, and every time you have an electric bicycle out there, it can replace a whole car. That's great.

The solutions that we have for the Yukon — we are outstripping most of Canada in the uptake.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, the legislated goal is 30 percent of vehicle sales and 4,800 electric vehicles on the road by 2030. The minister didn't even come close to answering where we're at and if we're on pace to meet that goal.

The *Clean Energy Act* commits that the minister must produce a report in 2023 that outlines progress made on all of the goals and commitments made in the act.

My question is simple: When will the minister produce that report?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, just to continue from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources with respect to electric vehicles, in 2023, the Yukon government received 13 gas hybrid pickup trucks that are now in use across the fleet and two full battery electric cargo vans that are being used in the mailroom. Members in the Assembly will have seen those vans around the Jim Smith Building. I believe that they have been very well received and, of course, they are great for the purpose.

In 2024, we will add two more cargo vans and three pickup trucks, all battery electric, that will be deployed to program areas based on the best use of these vehicles. In addition, we anticipate that 30 more battery electric cars will be delivered in the spring of 2024 in order to replace older gas models.

The estimates are that, in the fleet vehicles with respect to light duty, we will be approaching 10 percent of the fleet in fiscal year 2024-25. Yes, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources indicated, it is not linear, but we are pushing and I am pushing for this to be a priority. Highways and Public Works continues to meet with local dealerships to build relationships and understand market conditions so that we can maximize the number of electric vehicles in the government fleet.

Market stabilization and transition to EV production for battery electric trucks and SUVs is evident with recent bids from suppliers of EVs.

### **Question re: Affordable housing**

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, for many Yukoners, the dream of owning a home seems further and further out of reach every day. With high interest rates and the skyrocketing cost of living, many people are giving up hope of ever being able to save for a down payment and qualify for a mortgage.

This government seems to think that developing lots is all they have to do to address the housing crisis, but most of these lots become large, expensive houses that are unaffordable to most people — particularly to those entering the housing market for the first time.

There are things that would help. The Liberals could be encouraging modular homes, which are cheaper and avoid the backlog of builders. They could be encouraging the building of smaller, more affordable homes. They could be investing in alternative housing models like housing co-ops.

But the Liberals haven't seemed interested in any of these options, so what are they going to do? Do the Liberals have any plans to help first-time buyers to afford homes?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, there are several things that we are doing. The first one is that we work with our municipalities, because they do the planning for our communities. They prepare the official community plans. They design the subdivisions.

We work with them, and we encourage that they do, for example, more townhouse lots, more multi-family lots, more lots that will lead to smaller and more affordable homes. That lead is the municipality's, but we are supportive of them in that work, and then we are investing in programs like the community land trust. We have investments that we are making into alternative models, and we will continue to do that and look for ways.

Finally, we are partnering with First Nations in their land development, as well, and the Minister of Community Services, I am sure, could talk more about that. There are several ways in which we are working to support Yukoners to enter into the housing market at a reasonable entry level for them, because we see housing as a spectrum, and we look to support it at all levels.

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, one program that Yukon Housing runs that is supposed to help people buy a home is the Yukon home ownership program. The Yukon home ownership program is meant to help people build or buy a home when they don't qualify for a mortgage through a bank. For the many people who pay the equivalent of a mortgage payment every month in rent yet still can't get a mortgage, this program is the difference between renting forever and finally being able to own a home — or it would be if they could access it, because of the 40 people who applied this year, only one was approved. That is right — 40 people applied; 39 were rejected.

A program that helps one person and rejects 98 percent of the applicants is a failure. What is this government doing to fix this program so that more than one person per year can access it?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I will provide some information, and I will pass on the question to the Premier.

Our government is committed to improving home ownership options and availability. That is why, in 2023, the Yukon Housing Corporation expanded the home ownership loan program with a rural-based program to include residents of Whitehorse. The mortgage lending program supports eligible Yukoners to build or purchase a home based on loans at one percent below the average posted five-year rate of the major banks and reduce the down payment rate of two and one-half percent.

Again, the Housing Corporation is providing loans for Yukoners, and I am happy to get more detailed information for the member opposite.

**MLA Tredger:** It is hard to say that program is supporting people when 39 of the 40 applications were denied. To add insult to injury, the 39 people who were denied had already put weeks of work into their applications. Before they could apply, each person had to line up a house and a seller who



was willing to wait for them to get approved by Yukon Housing. Then they had to go to a bank and get denied for a mortgage. Then and only then could they finally apply to the home ownership program, only to be denied and have the entire deal fall through.

They need to do these steps every time they find a potential house to buy. It's getting to the point where builders and realtors don't want to sell to people who plan to use the home ownership program, because it's not worth the trouble.

It would make a lot more sense and save everyone a lot of work if applications could be pre-approved through the Yukon home ownership program, just like other people are pre-approved through banks. This would be a short-term fix while Yukon Housing redesigns the program, but it would save a lot of people a lot of grief.

Will this government change the program so that people can be conditionally pre-approved?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, again, I'm happy to pass the question on to the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation. One of the things I will say is that there are eligibility criteria for households, and it's about that they've already gone through the traditional process to ensure that they're not eligible that way. So, there are thresholds that are there.

I don't know the details that the member opposite is raising, but I do know that the Housing Corporation has as its underlying philosophy to support Yukoners and to help them with home ownership. I know from the past, when I have sat in on their housing initiatives, that they have broadly looked at the spectrum of housing and how to support Yukoners. I appreciate that the member opposite is trying to be critical of us as a government, but my experience with the Housing Corporation is that they work — they're very focused on clients and how to support them.

So, I think that we can get details back on the specific question. However, in principle, the Housing Corporation's efforts are to support Yukoners finding housing.

#### **Question re: Rural emergency services**

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, this September, the Dawson fire chief raised his concerns about firefighters having to do the work of paramedics. The Yukon government has said that they require additional volunteers in rural communities to provide EMS coverage. However, this morning, CBC Yukon reported that a new volunteer organization is stepping in to cover EMS gaps in Dawson, but government would not meet with them.

Can the minister tell Yukoners why Dawson volunteers are having to create their own organization to cover EMS gaps in their community and the government has not yet met with them?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Yukoners that we are extremely supportive of emergency medical services in the communities and emergency services that are provided both by employees of the Yukon government and by volunteers. I am looking forward to the conversations with the organization that has been struck in Dawson City. I can

assure you that our department is interested in having those conversations with them.

An e-mail was sent in October presenting the intent to form the Dawson City ambulance association as a separate entity from Yukon medical services. The Dawson ambulance association is requesting to meet and are seeking government support.

There are a lot of questions here to discuss. We are very keen to be at a table where we can see what their intent is — we have not been informed initially of their intent — and the proposal that is being brought forward, but there are a number of very serious issues, including the ability to provide this in a volunteer way that is not associated with Yukon government and the insurance that is provided through that association.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** We have been raising concerns for years about the declining state of health services under the current government. Earlier this Sitting, the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin shared that one rural EMS worker estimated that there are 50 fewer rural EMS volunteer members than 13 years ago, and 20 of those departures have happened in the past couple of years. It now appears that there are volunteers available in Dawson, but they are starting their own organization instead of volunteering with Yukon EMS.

Will the minister agree to meet with EMS supervisors from across the Yukon and hear their input on what the government should do to improve recruitment and retention of EMS volunteers?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is quite simple to that question — yes. We work with Emergency Medical Services in the territory all the time. In the last number of months, we have certainly made sure that it is a priority to determine how Emergency Medical Services is adjusting to being associated with the Department of Health and Social Services, the increased pressures on them, and the services that they provide to Yukon communities, which are second to none.

There are currently 98 community responders providing EMS services across the territory — volunteers for which we are immensely appreciative. The scope of practice for those volunteers is tied to the position of being a volunteer community responder. We make sure that those interested in volunteering have mandatory orientation training that is covered by Yukon Emergency Medical Services. Volunteers receive an hourly honorarium when they are on call and are paid an hourly rate when responding to calls that require them to go into the community and provide this amazing service.

#### **Question re: Diabetes treatment**

**Ms. Clarke:** On May 19, 2021, this Legislature unanimously passed a motion urging the Government of Yukon to develop a territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy to be completed by September 2022, in partnership with the Yukon T1D Support Network.

It has been over a year since that strategy was supposed to have been finished. When will the strategy be completed, and what are the current hold-ups to getting it done?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Unfortunately, sometimes this Legislature brings forward — I'm going to call them "arbitrary

dates” — to have accepted by the Legislature, and the work that is required to complete the kinds of work that are determined here by vote sometimes take longer than we would want them to.

We are continuing to work with the type 1 diabetes — on the strategy for the Yukon. Our ongoing work with Yukoners with type 1 diabetes and their families, advocates, and service providers aligns, Mr. Speaker, with the recommendations in *Putting People First*. Our government is committed to enhancing supports for Yukoners living with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, and to improve the health outcomes.

We are absolutely committed. We have almost \$1 million this year put into the chronic conditions support program. Unfortunately, the Yukon Party didn't vote for that budget, and fortunately, that budget went ahead anyway and does provide support for the chronic conditions program.

As the member noted, back in May 2021, the motion was passed, and I look forward to continuing to provide information about the progress on the strategy.

**Ms. Clarke:** It is identified that children who are transitioning into adulthood are at particular risk for poor services in health care, and this timeline lasts for over a decade.

There is a subsequent need for an adult endocrinologist. They are specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of many conditions, including diabetes. Will the minister ensure that the services of an adult endocrinologist are made available for Yukoners?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk to Yukoners about the work that we are doing with the territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy and our work toward implementing such. An endocrinologist, frankly, is a medical — and the need for such in the community is a medical decision — and we work constantly with the Yukon Medical Association and with other doctors who can provide the kind of advice that is necessary to consider this kind of question.

The type 1 diabetes strategy is currently being drafted. Interviews and focus groups were completed by the T1D Support Network in the late fall of 2022. Unfortunately, that work took longer, but we must do the work well, and that is supported by the work that we are doing together. At that point, that work sort of forms the basis of the needs assessment for the strategy. We absolutely support the services and supports for individuals who are dealing with diabetes.

We thank the T1D Support Network for their advocacy, for their intensive work on the strategy going forward, and their work to address the importance of this kind of care for Yukoners.

#### **Question re: Rural school replacement**

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, Yukoners living in rural communities have been following with interest the consultation process that the Liberal government conducted to seek feedback about a plan for replacing or retrofitting schools in Whitehorse, but it has been noticeable that the Liberal

government chose not to include rural schools in the planning exercise.

So, I would like to ask about some rural schools that have been ignored by this government in the planning exercise. Are there any plans for capital upgrades or replacement of the St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction, and if so, when will my community be engaged?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak about capital planning for the territory. The Government of Yukon's five-year capital plan includes some school replacements and renovation projects to ensure that all buildings are safe and suitable for many years to come. In terms of projects that we have underway, we do have a rural school that is being planned now that is in the Kluane area — the Kêts'ádañ Kù school is well underway in the planning. We are really looking forward, of course, to the ground-breaking for this project, although much work has been done.

I have had a lot of opportunity to meet with the First Nation School Board and with the Chiefs Committee on Education. The school that is being spoken about today on the floor of the Legislature is a school that has moved under the First Nation School Board. We are working very closely with them. I recently attended a Chiefs Committee on Education where we went over the conditions and issues in all schools but particularly the schools that are under the First Nation School Board. Those discussions will continue.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I heard a clear commitment in that response, so I will try again with a different community.

The Nelnah Bessie John School — the little school that could — in Beaver Creek is certainly showing its age. Can the minister tell residents in Beaver Creek where their school fits in the capital plans of the Yukon government?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, again, we are working, of course, with school communities and with the capital planning — the five-year capital plan — that we have to look at the short-term, medium-term, and long-term needs. We work very closely with all school communities on any issues that they may have. We move projects, and if they are urgent, we will, of course, take immediate action on that. We work, of course, with Highways and Public Works.

The school in Beaver Creek is another school that has done a referendum to go under the First Nation School Board. This was another school that, when we met with the Chiefs Committee on Education — which we now have an agreement with the Chiefs Committee on Education to work closely with them on all matters relating to the First Nation School Board. This was one of the schools that we looked at, and we went over the details around the needs for that school. We will continue to work with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nation School Board.

**Mr. Istchenko:** So, I'm not sure that I heard a very clear commitment there either, Mr. Speaker. I know that my constituents would appreciate hearing what the plans are for their school.

Let me move on to Ross River. There is probably no better example in the territory of a school that needs replacement than

in Ross River. I know that the re-levelling work and a new modular mechanical room are both projects that are occurring in this year's budget, but what folks in Ross River would like to know is when they should expect to see planning beginning for a new school for them.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, as Members of the Legislative Assembly have heard previously, the Ross River School is inspected quarterly by a multi-disciplinary team that includes an architect, a structural engineer, a geotechnical engineer, and a surveyor. The latest building condition inspection report, received on September 7, 2023, confirmed the school remains safe for occupancy. The next inspection report is expected to be received in December 2023.

Mr. Speaker, the installation of the new re-levelling system at the school was successfully completed in the spring of 2023. Over 200 permanent jacks were installed underneath the school and can be reused in the future to address any further movement of the school. There was significant participation with the Yukon First Nation participation plan provided for the Ross River Dena Council. Additional work related to the re-levelling — such as fixing the building, skirting, siding, drywall crack repairs, and readjustment of doorframes — will also be completed.

This was a contract that was awarded — the re-levelling contract was awarded in the amount of \$3.55 million, and a contract for the new mechanical room was awarded in the amount of \$1.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, we are certainly listening to the concerns of the community of Ross River, and we are improving the infrastructure at their school substantially.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### Bill No. 31: *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act* — Third Reading

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 31, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31, entitled *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 31, entitled *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I will take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Assembly for their contributions to the debate on this bill. I will review very briefly the key provisions that are being proposed with the *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act*. The proposed legislation works to facilitate fiduciary access to a deceased or incapable person's digital assets and to prevent online service providers from limiting access to these assets and prevents them from not recognizing these rights for Yukoners.

The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring that our legislation is adaptive to the changing realities of an increasingly digitized world. This proposed legislation will ensure that the digital assets of deceased or incapable Yukoners are managed in accordance with the respective wishes of those individuals. While online service providers may favour restrictive service agreements that limit access to only the original account holder, fiduciaries require access to digital assets to properly fulfill their legal obligations and to respect the wishes of deceased people or those who require someone to act on their behalf.

Once enacted, the legislation will invalidate any service agreement provisions that limit fiduciary access to digital assets, unless expressly agreed to by the original account holder through an affirmative act that is separate from their assent to the general terms of a service agreement.

The Government of Yukon is very pleased to bring forward this proposed legislation, which aims to provide stronger protections to the digital assets of current and future Yukoners. Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation will enable the government to align our legislation with best practices of other Canadian and international jurisdictions. I note that this legislation is in line with similar legislation that is in place in other jurisdictions across Canada, including New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island.

The proposed legislation is based on the recommendations from the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, as a reminder, and our government is taking proactive measures here to introduce this new law in order to reflect the world we live in by removing potential hurdles when dealing with a loved one's estate. By modernizing our legislation, we are ensuring that estate planning keeps pace with the ever-changing digital landscape.

Lastly, I would like to encourage all Members of this Legislative Assembly to support the passing of this bill to introduce the *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act*.

**Mr. Cathers:** This legislation is largely a matter of housekeeping, and we do support the concept of it. Unlike the minister, I will not repeat my previous remarks at length here in this Assembly. So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I will wrap up my remarks, and we will be supporting the passage of this housekeeping bill.

**Ms. Blake:** The NDP will be voting in favour of this legislation, and we extend our thanks to the officials from the department for their work.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I appreciate the comments from the members opposite. I would only like to correct one thing: This is not housekeeping legislation; it is a new law to protect the rights of Yukoners, and we are proud to bring it forward.

**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. 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:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**MLA Tredger:** Agree.

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

**Speaker:** The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 31 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 31 has passed this House.

### Bill No. 34: *Technical Amendments (Finance) Act (2023)* — Third Reading

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 34, standing in the name of the Hon. Sandy Silver.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, entitled *Technical Amendments (Finance) Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 34, entitled *Technical Amendments (Finance) Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for the debate in second reading and in Committee of the Whole, and I am looking forward to passing this legislation.

**Mr. Cathers:** This legislation is largely technical and housekeeping in nature; however, there are two parts of it that relate to policy decisions that we disagree with made by the Liberal government. Those are specifically the elimination of Central Stores and the elimination of the Queen's Printer, now known as the King's Printer, and so, we will not be supporting this legislation.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. 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.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**MLA Tredger:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 34 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 34 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 certain bills which have passed this House.

*Commissioner Webber 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:** *Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act; Technical Amendments (Finance) Act (2023).*

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

*Commissioner leaves the Chamber*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

### Bill No. 211: *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

### Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — continued

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

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I am looking forward to the conversation this afternoon. I will just welcome back Deputy Minister Lauren Haney and Assistant Deputy Minister Patricia Randell who are here to help provide information for opposition members through their questions about Energy, Mines and Resources. I look forward to today's debate.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, I would like to welcome the officials here as well today to support the minister for this afternoon's discussion.

I am going to start off with some questions regarding the mining industry. Currently, the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* are under review. I am wondering if the minister can give us a status update on that review and when he would expect those pieces of legislation to go out for public comment and then when he expects them to be actually tabled in the Legislature.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just to remind Yukoners where we are at, I will go back a little bit. We pulled together the mineral development strategy that then highlighted the work toward

new mineral legislation. We formed a steering committee that involves government-to-government work with First Nation governments and we went out and did a broad engagement with the public. We got that information back from the public. The steering committee has held tables with industry and the environmental non-governmental organizations to get some feedback, and now we're at the government-to-government table — the steering committee is doing that hard work right now.

The whole point of that is to formulate a new legislative framework. It's difficult for me to put a timeline on that, but I have made commitments to First Nations that this is an important issue and that we will do our best to resource it to try to keep it moving as quickly as possible. I can't say to the Assembly today: Here is what we anticipate. But I do know that they are in the middle of that hard work right now.

I will also say — and this is a little bit for fun — that I would be happy to bring a ministerial statement back once I get that framework in place and share it with the House.

**Mr. Kent:** It was a couple of years ago this fall, I think, that we made changes to the *Yukon Lands Act* that were enabling changes to allow for the development of resource road regulations. At the time, the minister said that they would be ready in the spring and then that deadline slipped a couple of times since then. I am wondering if the minister can give us any idea when the resource road regulations will be completed and what complications with the process have been encountered that have led to this significant number of delays that we have seen.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There has been more time taken with the resource road regulations.

A couple of things that I can comment on — first of all, forestry roads are slightly different. They are handled in a different way, so this is really mostly about roads that will pertain to the mining industry.

I just mentioned in my previous answer when I got up that when I have sat down with First Nations, they really want us to keep moving diligently on new mineral legislation. This is a moment when I talk with them and they express questions or concerns about the resource road regulations. We also discuss how we also want to keep it moving as quickly as possible.

One of the things that I talked to them about is that, if we can keep it moving to the finish line right now, then there is still an opportunity for us to review those regulations and see how they start to work out there in the real world, because we're also doing successor legislation around lands. That's an opportunity where the resource road regulations could be looked at again.

I think that we have been in close conversation with industry as well, because as I mentioned, this will be important for the mining industry. We have had conversations with the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

I am still hopeful for the timing for the regulations to be next year, but there is that back-and-forth right now with First Nations just making sure that we are aligned. I have written recently to several chiefs about the resource road regulations. We are still hopeful for 2024.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that response from the minister.

I wanted to ask a few other questions here. The minister's predecessor, who is obviously now the Premier — when I asked him in the previous legislative session, in the 2016 to 2021 session, whether or not his government supported the free-entry system for acquiring mineral tenure, he very succinctly told the House in one word: yes. I am just curious if that is still the position of the Liberal government. Do they still support the free-entry system for acquiring mineral tenure for staking claims, essentially?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** When I rose two times ago and talked about the new mineral legislation, the steering committee, and the work that is ongoing — that is the conversation right now. What will we use as a model? I think it's fair to say that it is one of the key parts of the conversation.

I will share with the House that we don't think that the status quo is going to be the way to go. I am talking about overall — the legislation needs to be updated and brought forward in time. That will include questions about free-entry.

So, I don't think that it will be the same as it was. I think there may be aspects of it that are being considered, and that is a conversation at the table right now. The only other thing that I would like to say is that I want to recognize that First Nations have very clear views about these sorts of questions — or they feel that these questions are fundamental to the legislation — so we will work government-to-government to see where we can find a future path for the Yukon around minerals legislation.

**Mr. Kent:** I have asked the minister over a number of Sittings about implementation of the mineral development strategy. He has mentioned on a few occasions that much of that will be done with the legislative review, but a commitment that he has made is to provide us with a list of those aspects of the MDS, or the mineral development strategy, that are being done through the legislative review and which ones will be considered outside of the legislative review. I don't believe that I have ever received that summary from him, so I am hoping that he can rise today — if I am incorrect and he has provided it, I stand corrected. If not, I am wondering if he will commit again to providing us with that list of which commitments from the MDS are under the legislative review and which ones are stand-alone.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I don't recall ever having shared that list across — I apologize if that's an unmet commitment. I will let the department know that I would like them to pull that together for the members opposite or for the House.

Here is what I can say. There were a couple of hundred recommendations, as I recollect — or quite a few — under the mineral development strategy. What I was told when I came into the role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is that roughly half of those recommendations pertained to successor legislation and half did not.

What we said to industry and First Nation governments at the time was: Because successor legislation is our priority, let's focus on that half and we will keep the other half to look at following successor legislation or once it's well enough

underway that we can see the pathway and that we can pull resources on to the additional topics.

My apologies to the House that I have not yet provided that information. It just dropped off my radar screen. I will seek to get it back for the member opposite and table it as a legislative return at some point — or e-mail it around or in some way get it across to members opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that. I look forward to receiving that document.

I did want to ask about the Yukon mineral exploration program. It was perhaps earlier this week and in a news release earlier this year that the minister announced that there was \$1.4 million in government funding, which leveraged over \$3 million in private sector funding. I just wanted to make sure — was all of that money spent in this exploration season since that announcement was made in the spring?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I have asked the department to look into the status of whether that money has been spent.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that and I look forward to getting that information back from the minister.

With the Geoscience Forum coming up this weekend, I am just curious if the minister is able to share with us the 2023 season exploration and development numbers for the quartz industry and then what the placer production was for this year as well.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** You know, I haven't even had a chance yet to read over any speaking notes that I have for Geoscience — I think we all appreciate how busy the Assembly is — so, if there are numbers that the department has provided me with, I don't have them yet, but if they have put them in the Geoscience's speaking notes, I am hopeful to just wait until then to share that information.

Anyway, what I have been told is that — just on the previous question about the spending on the projects from the Yukon mineral exploration program — they expect to have a report on the spending to me by January 2024. It is at calendar year-end when they do that analysis to see how the dollars were spent. The \$3.2 million in private sector spending on these projects is the expectation of leverage.

I will try to look into the overall spend on exploration this year, but if they were saving it for Geoscience, I'm also going to beg my colleagues' indulgence to not do a spoiler for this weekend.

**Mr. Kent:** Presuming if it's next week or after the Legislature rises and the minister returns with those numbers or if they are announced at Geoscience, I am curious, as I mentioned, about the exploration and development numbers on the quartz side, the amount of placer production for this season, as well as the number of projects on the quartz side. I know that last year the Yukon government geologist from the Geological Survey mentioned that we were at a 57-year low in new projects, so I will be curious if that trend is continuing into this past exploration season — whether we are seeing just a few projects getting a large amount of money or if the pipeline is starting to fill up again with some of the early-stage exploration projects.

So, if the minister could provide that, too, and I'll attend some of the Geoscience and hopefully get an opportunity to hear what government geologists have to say this year about the past exploration season.

I do want to move to talk a little bit about land use planning. The Dawson land use plan — my understanding from talking to industry is that there is currently some scenario work that is being done with respect to projects. It brings a number of people to the table to get a sense for how projects would fit through the environmental and socio-economic assessment and the permitting side of things with the land use plan in place. I understand that there are some hiccups that have been encountered with respect to those different scenarios. I am curious if the minister can share any of his more recent knowledge. The conversations I had were at the Gold Show in the spring and more recently in September with some of the quartz mining individuals.

I am just curious if the minister has an update on that scenario and when can we expect the Dawson regional land use plan to be finalized and whether or not there are any changes that need to be made to it, based on the scenarios that they are running at this point.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I just will back up for a second just to let the member opposite know that the Geological Survey has let me know that they're still compiling the numbers for this year, and they work with industry right up to the deadline. They let me know that they don't have the numbers as of yet, but they are working to get them and will share them at Geoscience — or their best estimates of the numbers. So, I don't have them yet, but they will be out and will be public as of Geoscience, is what I understand.

With respect to the Dawson regional land use plan, yes, we have done some scenario planning. I'll give a shout-out to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. It was their suggestion to do that scenario planning. It was incredibly successful. When I talked to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the team at land use planning, they said it was very useful. They had industry and environmental groups there as observers to watch how it went, and there were debriefs afterward.

On the Dawson land use plan, we are working closely with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and our First Nation partners to seek consensus on our proposals following the recommended plan from the commission, including working with them to create any public-facing information on that, sort of like an update. Because we're right in with that conversation right now, I don't have more to say about specifics or details, but I will say that I have been encouraged by the work that I've seen from the department and from the government of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. They're working well together through those last issues.

**Mr. Kent:** I did want to check in on a commitment that was made in the original confidence and supply agreement — the 2021 version — with respect to providing resources to accelerate other land use planning exercises. Is the minister able to let us know if there is any money in the supplementary budget for that or if there is any money in the mains to

accelerate the plans and where they would be looking at proceeding to next, as far as the next regional land use plan?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The first thing that I will note is that it is in my mandate letter to accelerate land use planning. The direction that the Premier has given me is to, wherever possible, move land use planning ahead. The first step for me is to get the agreements in place with the First Nations, and a budget will follow. For example, we are in conversation — I mentioned the other day during Question Period — with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. They would like us to move ahead with the Northern Tutchone regional plan. We have, of course, spoken with the Selkirk First Nation and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. Currently, those nations are, I believe, supportive of us moving ahead with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun but not yet themselves wanting to move ahead, but we remain open to their interests. So, we have those ongoing conversations.

We have reached out to all First Nations on the other three regional plan areas. The question was about dollars, so I should at least acknowledge that 2024 is a year when there was the expectation to revisit with the Government of Canada funding for issues such as land use planning, land use planning implementation, and many things around our land claims agreements. That work is being led by the Premier and the Executive Council Office, but this issue is an important issue, so we have also been keeping Canada up to speed about our interest in land use planning and its importance for shaping the direction of the Yukon.

**Mr. Kent:** One of the topics we have touched on a number of times is with respect to compensation for claims that are either indirectly or directly affected when it comes to land use plans. The minister has mentioned that a significant number of claims in the Peel watershed land use planning region have been relinquished in exchange for work credits on other properties that they may have within the Yukon, but as we have said — and we've talked to some companies — that's not an option for them; they don't have other projects or properties within the boundaries of the Yukon, and they've spent significant amounts of dollars exploring these properties. Some of them — the Michelle property, for instance — is located in what was supposed to be an area where mining was allowed, and I think it overlaps into an area where it is not allowed.

That said, I am wondering, as the acceleration of the plan goes forward, if the minister will develop a companion policy with respect to compensation when claims are directly or indirectly affected, recognizing that one particular way for compensation will not work for all of the claims that may or may not be affected by land use planning decisions.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, the last numbers that I have are that there are about 9,000 mineral claims in the Peel that were underneath areas that were identified for conservation. Of those claims, 6,500 have been dealt with, possibly — it depends; it is a range of possibilities. They might have lapsed; they might have been relinquished; they might have had some non-monetary compensation. That is a significant amount of work that the department has undergone.

We always try to treat these on a case-by-case basis with claim holders to consider compensation requests. We don't

have a specific policy that the member is talking about, but we have identified, under new minerals legislation — under successor legislation — that it should be a question that is considered. It is not the first question that we will deal with as we develop that legislative framework, but it is on the agenda overall.

You know, we will continue to look for those solutions. Let me just, by way of comparison, talk about the Dawson plan. I asked the department to give me a sense of how many claims there were that — in-between the draft plan and the recommended plan — that came in, in areas under which then moved to have conservation. So, it's a different number; this is not the overall number, but it was under 400 claims.

So, that gives you such a huge swing in difference to try to understand. It is a way in which I have asked to try to judge whether the process that we used under the Dawson regional land use plan is going to head off these potential issues through the pathways that we have taken, and from my estimation, it is much more successful.

I appreciate the questions. This is not the first time that the member has posed this question. The answers that we have are: (1) we are working to resolve the existing outstanding issues, and we will do that on a case-by-case basis; (2) we are adopting our approach to land use planning so as to minimize these types of concerns; and (3) we will work through successor legislation to consider this question.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to take step back then to that number of claims that the minister mentioned — 400 — and I don't expect him to have this number with him today; I am hoping that he can come back with it — but can he give us a sense for how many quartz and placer mining claims are located under areas that are proposed for conservation in the Dawson area? I think that he mentioned for the Peel that it was 9,000 — I think was the number — yes, 9,000 claims, and 6,500 have been relinquished in some fashion. I am just curious for that Dawson area if he can get those same numbers for the Legislature. How many quartz and placer claims are now located in areas where there will be — that are designated for conservation?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I don't have those numbers available to the House today, but I can let members know that I have asked for this type of analysis, and I am looking to understand how the processes work and how we can move through land use planning as smoothly as possible.

**Mr. Kent:** Hopefully, the minister can bring those numbers back once that analysis is complete — if it's not complete already — and give us a sense of how many claims in the Dawson region would be affected in those conservation areas — with a breakdown, of course, between quartz and placer.

I did want to ask a question with respect to the Beaver River land use plan. My understanding from earlier in the Sitting and looking at the website at the time was that we were expecting a draft plan by December of this year. I am wondering if we are still on pace to get that draft plan. I won't go through all the history here, but the final plan was expected to be done in 2020, and here we are three years, three and a half, well over three years past that deadline, and we are not even at

the draft plan stage. Can the minister give us a sense of any renewed timing that he has with respect to the finalization of the Beaver River land use plan?

I know, as part of that planning process, that there was a court case launched from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun versus the Yukon government. The First Nation was successful in that Yukon Supreme Court case. It was appealed by the Yukon government, so I am just curious if the minister can share any information on timing for that appeal and when he expects it to be heard or if it has been heard already.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** A couple of things. The first one is: Let me acknowledge that the plan has taken much longer than we as a government and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun anticipated when we first signed our agreement. I know that they have been working this year — and I also know that Mayo was evacuated for fire, and there are challenges that they face, and those impacts are meaningful.

The other thing I will say is that what I feel the Beaver River land use plan has done is that it has broadly focused the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to the necessity of regional land use planning. I think that, even though we're slow on the Beaver River sub-regional plan, I am impressed with the interest and focus that NND has on the Northern Tutchone plan — or the northern portion of the Northern Tutchone plan. So, that's positive.

Then the member opposite asked about timing on the appeal. I think it's going to be heard sometime in the coming weeks.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that information with respect to the appeal from the minister.

I do want to ask a couple of questions related to Faro. It was a number of years ago that the Faro reclamation project was transferred back to the federal government for them to lead that work. The Yukon government kept a number of the other type 2 sites. I'm just curious: When that transfer — and again, the minister may not have this information with him today — but when that transfer happened, how did it affect the staff at the Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch? Were any of the staff transferred to the federal government, or were any staff subsequently laid off when that large Faro project was transferred away from responsibility for the Yukon and to the responsibility of the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am just checking in with the department. I know that there were no layoffs. What I don't know is whether there were any staff who chose to move across to stay with the project.

There were not any staff transferred, Madam Chair. I look forward to further questions.

**Mr. Kent:** So, all of the staff in Assessment and Abandoned Mines stayed in place, even after this very large project was transferred from their responsibility. I am just curious and wanted to make sure that is the case: that all of the staff, even though a huge part of their work was transferred back to the federal government, still remained at Assessment and Abandoned Mines.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The first thing to understand is that this is not the staff who are remediating mines. They are



overseeing that work, of course. What I can say is that we still have other sites that we have to take care of, and through attrition, there is always a natural reduction of staff over time, depending. We always balance out, but it wasn't that we laid people off, because that project went.

The department, every year, does an assessment to ensure that it is rightsized around the services that are being delivered. When necessary, it looks for staff, through advancement or lateral moves, to move into other areas. I would have to look back over time to ask the department to let me know how big that branch was when Faro was still their responsibility and how big it was, say, a year after. Government adjusts over time to make sure that we have the appropriate number of staff to deal with the appropriate workloads.

**Mr. Kent:** I think it was a little over two years ago, in the summer of 2021, that the Ross River Dena Council, through their development corporation, and Broden Mining formed a partnership to reacquire, explore, and develop the claims within that Faro complex, the claims on the eastern plateau — the old Vangorda and I believe the Grum pit and some of the other claims there. From the minister and in speaking with some individuals, it sounds like that process has stalled out. I'm wondering if the minister has any explanation.

I know that Canada plays a significant role in what's happening there, but if the minister can give us an update on where we're at with that Faro project and the redevelopment of the eastern part of the Vangorda Plateau.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Under the devolution transfer agreement, the next step that we have identified on the project really has to do with First Nation government to First Nation government actions, so we have been working to assist that where possible. I know that the Ross River Dena Council government and the Selkirk First Nation government are in conversation or dialogue. That is what we believe needs to be next and we will continue to assist as possible.

**Mr. Kent:** Does the minister have any indication on when we will be able to move to the next step in that process and when exploration can recommence — or commence, in some circumstances — on that property and all of the other actions that need to be required with respect to the transfer? Or is all that complete at this point, or are we at a First Nation government-to-government table? The question is: Does the minister have any indication on when those conversations will conclude and when the project will be able to move forward?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The timing is dependent on this next step is what I am given to understand. We certainly have heard from the industry partner on this issue, and as a result, we are working to facilitate the conversation as best we can. We are therefore not able to give a sense of the timeline, but we are able to indicate that we seek to facilitate as best as possible.

**Mr. Kent:** I did want to jump over to the minister's mandate letter with respect to critical minerals development. On page 3 at the very bottom, it says that the minister has been instructed by the Premier to work with NRCan on the implementation of Canada's critical mineral strategy and consider other made-in-Yukon solutions to expediting the development of the Yukon's critical mineral inventory.

I know that Minister Wilkinson from NRCan at the time — and still is the minister — was to have held some regional roundtables. I am curious if the minister can provide us with an update on those regional roundtables — if there was one held in the Yukon. Can the minister also comment on any progress he has made in expediting the development of Yukon's critical mineral inventory with the made-in-Yukon solutions that are referenced in the mandate letter?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The regional energy and resource tables are the bilateral tables that we have with Natural Resources Canada. We are now working on that together.

When we say in my mandate letter that it's about expediting the development of the Yukon's critical mineral inventory, we are not talking about just assessing how much in critical minerals we have; the geological survey has a pretty good idea of that. It's about the infrastructure which would assist in the development of those critical minerals.

In one of my answers to the member opposite — or maybe it was in Question Period; I can't remember now — I talked about the mineral exploration program and how we added a focus around critical minerals. That was a way in which we were trying to adjust.

Our main focus — our primary focus — under the regional energy and resource table — apologies, Madam Chair. I just think of it in the acronym and I always forget the words underneath it and I try hard not to give acronyms for Hansard.

Our main focus under that table is grid connect — us connecting with British Columbia. We have identified that priority with Natural Resources Canada and they have been working with us. For example, there was just, at the end of October, a workshop hosted by the Council of Yukon First Nations — or broadly by First Nations — on energy questions. Natural Resources Canada was there to talk about grid connect and to talk about our work with First Nations to move ahead on grid connect, because that question really does unlock making sure that you have the capacity for renewable energy, which then unlocks mining to be able to be done with much lower emissions and on our path to net zero. That is the major focus and that work is now underway with Natural Resources Canada.

**Mr. Kent:** I'll hopefully get a chance to come back and ask some more questions about that BC intertie and the status of it before I turn the floor over to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King later today.

Just one other quick question with respect to mining. It's a logistical question regarding the office hours and accessibility for the mining recorders' offices across the territory. I've had a number of prospectors and others — placer miners — reach out with concerns that the Whitehorse mining recorder's office is closed. You have to book an appointment. It's something, obviously, that is a remnant of COVID, which was understandable at the time, but I'm wondering if there is any consideration being given to returning to the pre-COVID operations of these offices where they are open for individuals to come in and ask questions without booking — I believe the appointments are booked in 15-minute time slots. It is proving

to be a bit of a challenge for some of the individuals whom I have talked to.

I am just looking to get a sense if the minister or his department is thinking about moving back to the pre-COVID office hours and operations for the mining recorders' offices in the territory.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This wasn't really just about COVID. There were a couple of things that happened. My recollection, anyway, was that there were a couple of times when there were some folks coming to the mining recorders' offices — a handful of occasions — who were a little elevated. There were some tensions and maybe even conflict.

So, the plan was to move to appointments so that the mining recorder folks could better prepare, get information, make sure that things were lined up, and try to de-escalate a bit. They felt that it has been successful — or they feel that it has been successful. You know, I hear from the member opposite that he is hearing that there are people out there who are concerned with this in how they prefer to do business.

I have just asked the department to maybe identify someone within the branch whom we could provide for miners so that, if they have concerns, we could get them to share those concerns so that we could get a read on it and then maybe consider some modifications. The approach was purposeful. It was meant to try to improve services for miners. I appreciate that might not have been universal, but the department felt that services had improved.

I will just make that offer that if there are miners out there who feel that they could be better served a different way, that we find a way to connect with them to work through that with them.

**Mr. Kent:** Yes, I can assure the minister that the service change was not universally well-received by those in industry whom we have spoken to. Hopefully, he gets a chance during this Geoscience weekend to talk to some of the prospectors and placer miners and others who are affected by this.

I wanted to ask a few questions — or just a couple of questions — with respect to some of the local area planning initiatives that are underway. The local advisory councils for Ibex Valley and Mount Lorne are looking to have their local area plans reviewed. In the case of Mount Lorne, I know that both me and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on separate occasions, visited with some of the area residents around the Kookatsoon gravel pit, which needs to be rezoned so that fuelwood processing can take place in that area, but I think that one of their concerns is that they would be looking to have the local area plan reviewed. I know that I have heard the same thing from my colleague the Member for Lake Laberge with respect to the Ibex Valley local area council and the fact that they would like their plan reviewed and would also like to look at some targeted wood harvesting to reduce the wildfire risk in that area.

So, I am just wondering if the minister can comment on whether he has received those requests from those two local area councils to have their existing local area plans reviewed, and if so, is there a plan in place to ensure that would happen? And if he could comment on the timing, that would be helpful.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I was excited to hear the member opposite say that the Ibex Valley LAC was interested in doing some fuel reduction. That is great to hear, and I will make sure that the Forest Management branch and also Wildland Fire follow up with them.

I often attend the Southern Lakes local advisory councils. That includes Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake, Tagish, and Carcross — South Klondike — local advisory councils, and everyone of them would like to see their local area plan updated. Local area plans are a partnership; we work with First Nation governments and local residents when we seek to update a plan. I can say that, for the Mount Lorne area respectfully, I hear from — I don't know that it is universal across First Nations — but I am certainly hearing from some First Nations that they would prefer that we complete regional planning first and then local area planning — or updates to local area plans, of course, because Mount Lorne would be an update.

I don't have a note in front of me regarding Ibex. I will reach into the department to try to get that extra information, but we do have several local area plans at work: Alaska Highway west and — I probably will mispronounce this — the Łu Zèla Mǎn, or Fish Lake, local area plan. We are working on the zoning regulations for Golden Horn, et cetera. I would be happy to talk about the area around Kookatsoon, but that is the general lay of the land.

**Mr. Kent:** It is my understanding that Marsh Lake and Tagish have not been finalized yet, so that wouldn't be a review of an existing plan. Those ones haven't been finalized. I believe that Fox Lake is another one that is underway that hasn't been finalized. I just wanted to confirm that's the case. Can the minister confirm that?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** In Southern Lakes, there are a couple of local area plans that are in place, and those local advisory councils would like to see them reviewed and updated. There are a couple that are not in place. The Marsh Lake plan is not in place. I don't believe that the Tagish plan is in place, but the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area plan is in place, so it is mixed.

What I am trying to say is that every one of the local advisory councils would like to update or initiate their local area plans.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for that clarification.

I did want to move on to some energy questions for the minister. We asked earlier today in Question Period about the requirement in the *Clean Energy Act*, which was passed last fall, with respect to reporting requirements starting in 2023 — reporting requirements on aspects contained in the act. I believe it was the minister's colleague the Minister of Highways and Public Works who responded to that question, but he did not mention anything about the reporting requirements contained in the *Clean Energy Act*.

I wanted to ask the minister now. You know, we are quickly running out of runway for 2023, and I am wondering when those legislative reports will be ready.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Minister of Environment, when he stood to respond today, was talking about the *Our Clean Future* annual report. I understand that one is still

coming for this calendar year, I believe. I think that's what I heard him say.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to be clear, these reporting requirements are written into the legislation that was introduced last year, so will those reports be ready for tabling before the end of the 2023 calendar year, as is stipulated in the act?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We're just back looking at the act to try to see where it says that we're required to table something here in this House. I've asked the department to review and make sure that we're living up to our obligations, but I'm not aware of a requirement to table in the Assembly.

**Mr. Kent:** I never mentioned that anything had to be tabled in the Assembly, but if the minister looks at section 9 of the act, on page 4, it says, "Report by Minister". Section 9(1) says: "The Minister must report on the following ... in 2023 and in each subsequent year, the total greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon, including by sector if a reduction target has been set for a sector for the year ... in 2023 and in each subsequent year, the methodology used to determine those greenhouse gas emissions..." And it goes on and on; I won't read the entire section.

As I said, I never mentioned that anything needed to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, but it does say that it needs to be done by the end of this calendar year. That's what the question was about. When can we expect, between now and December 31, these reports to be ready?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The intention has been to put it into our annual report with *Our Clean Future* and to put in there those emissions amounts. That report is coming. The lead on finalizing that report is with the Department of Environment. As the minister has said today and as I've reiterated today, the plan is to have that report out before the end of the calendar year.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to be clear, when we asked this question earlier in Question Period, the Minister of Highways and Public Works stood up and talked about electric vehicles and how many were in the Fleet Vehicle Agency; so, he didn't respond to that particular question, but we will review the Blues, and we'll look forward to getting that annual report before the end of the calendar year.

Just for background, last year's report was dated in August, and it was released in September. I'm just curious why there seems to be delays to getting this year's report out the door. That said, we'll hold the ministers to the legislated timelines for producing those reports, and we look forward to getting them or seeing them prior to the end of the calendar year.

I did want to ask a little bit more about the proposed BC intertie project that the minister referenced earlier as part of his work on the critical minerals strategy and the made-in-Yukon solutions to expedite the development of the critical minerals inventory here in the territory.

I am just curious if the minister can give us a sense for where we are at. When we last checked in with him, there were discussions with the affected First Nations. I note that the Premier travelled to British Columbia and talked to the MLA for the area as well as the Premier of BC about that, so I am just curious if the minister can give us an update on where

discussions are at with the BC intertie. Are there any milestones that we can see where we would move on to the next phase of that work?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I want to apologize. I just checked with my colleague the Minister of Environment. He did not talk about *Our Clean Future* being tabled by the end of this year, but I can confirm that it is the intention. Those are my words — apologies for that.

Second of all, the question is around new activity and milestones. I just want to be careful to say that — for example, when the First Nations held their energy summit last month and we were there talking about grid connect, it isn't just with First Nations that are along a route. We see this as an opportunity for all First Nations if they wish to become investment partners and be part of the project. We are talking with all Yukon First Nations.

That energy summit will lead to another set of meetings, I think, late this month where there will be more conversation with leadership. I know that the department is doing some of the initial technical work on the project. It's just that ongoing work that needs to happen.

I know that the Premier has asked me to work directly with my counterparts in British Columbia and for the department to work with their counterparts in British Columbia.

I think it is also worth noting that the Premier continues to prioritize this project whenever we are in discussions with the federal government. It is our focus, for example, for the regional energy and resource table.

**Mr. Kent:** I have quite a few questions left, but my time is running short here today.

I did want to turn the minister's attention to a document that was produced last summer. It's a feasibility study of small modular reactors in the Yukon. In the executive summary, in the first paragraph, the last couple of sentences — I will just read them into the record here. It says — quote: "Yukon 2020 emissions modeling suggests that the existing commitments along with federal policies and programs, are expected to reduce 2030 GHG emissions by approximately two-thirds of the 45 percent target." This, of course, would be 30 percent. "Additional measures are therefore needed to achieve the Yukon emissions reduction target." This is from Calian Consulting, which was tasked with, as I mentioned, the study of small modular reactors in the Yukon. I am wondering if the minister can comment on what additional measures the government is looking at to achieve the Yukon emissions reduction target and how small modular reactors will play into that work.

What are the next steps beyond this feasibility study for SMRs in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** A couple of things to try to unpack there. The first one is that, just a moment ago, the member asked why the *Our Clean Future* annual report is a little bit later. The main reason is that we have been integrating those actions that were presented to us from the Climate Leadership Council, so that takes more time. We understand that there are some of those actions that we could get at right away, but some

of them have to be costed and put through our internal processes, so that is the delay.

I have stood in this House and said the exact same thing. Probably, the folks who did the small modular reactor report are getting their information from the department, which is the same information that I have, which is that we believe that the actions that we have — anticipating the actions of the Climate Leadership Council being added to the mix — gets us to a 30-percent reduction. We have a gap and we have known that. We have identified a group of folks to sit down and try to talk about that gap and how to close it. It includes folks from Energy, Mines and Resources; it includes the Department of Environment; it includes the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation, and we have grabbed a couple of the folks from the Climate Leadership Council who went through the exercise to try to bring them in for some technical expertise. That work is to identify what the best projects are to reduce the gap.

One of the things that I find interesting when I look at the work of *Our Clean Future* or the Climate Leadership Council — you can really boil it down to a handful of the actions — the ones that really make a critical difference to the emissions. So, those will be the areas where we tend to focus.

With respect to small modular reactors, we have always said that we need to keep looking at this. It is what I would call a long-term solution around energy. The Yukon is not a jurisdiction that has any sort of regulatory framework or legislative framework for small modular nuclear reactors, so that is something that would still need to come into place if we were to go down that path.

We remain allied with other provinces that are investigating small modular reactors — for example, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, New Brunswick. Those provinces are looking at small modular, and they are considering — well, Ontario in particular has the lead at doing some trials with small modular. I think Saskatchewan is likely next in that queue. We will keep abreast of those projects to see about their feasibility for the Yukon. Of course, there is such a huge scale difference between Ontario or even Saskatchewan and the Yukon, so we need to understand that scale difference as well.

The time horizon for small modular has to be quite a ways out. It would be further than, say, a grid-connect project, but it depends on many factors. We continue to look at small modular reactors as a potential solution for the Yukon — a long-term solution — but we are not trying to rely on it in our 2030 goals, because we don't believe that it can get us there in that time frame, but it is a potential long-term solution for the Yukon. So, we continue to work in particular in partnership with other jurisdictions that are further ahead than we are on these technologies.

**Mr. Kent:** Just one suggestion for the minister: The air force base in Fairbanks — Eielson Air Force Base — I believe, next year, will have a combined heat and power small modular reactor in place to replace a 40-year-old, I believe, coal-fired co-gen plant, so that would be another project for the minister to keep an eye on.

With that, I know that we are going to go to break soon. I just wanted to thank the officials. I am going to turn the floor over to my colleague after the break, but I thank the officials for attending here this afternoon.

**Chair:** Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any further general debate?

**Ms. White:** Welcome back to the officials and the minister in this debate. Initially, I just thought I would pick up where we left off and we would just silently slide in like it wasn't a month and four days later, but I am just going to go back to October 10, which is the last time the minister and I had an opportunity to discuss Energy, Mines and Resources.

There was a very last question that I had put on the record before we moved to report progress for the day. I said that I wanted to talk about the proposed wood processing facility in Mount Lorne in the Kookatsoon gravel pit. It's not a bad thing that it has been this long since the minister and I had a chance to talk about it, because now he has had time. I look forward to having the conversation from where we left off and will just pick it up there. I want to start the conversation around the proposed wood processing facility in the Kookatsoon gravel pit.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will say that I have had a whole bunch of conversations about this very question with the community of Mount Lorne and the residents of Kookatsoon. Just as a starting point, we are looking to find areas to do some wood processing all around Whitehorse.

We are looking for an area at the north end of Whitehorse, in the middle of Whitehorse, and at the south end of Whitehorse.

The folks at the Forest Management branch looked at several possibilities, and the one that they felt was the most suitable was this old, disused gravel pit that is just south of Kookatsoon Lake. The closest property — and I think that the member opposite was referring to that property the other day — has really specific zoning around it. I will get the name of it —

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

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yes, rural residential secluded.

That type of zoning is meant to have a buffer of about 50 metres around it — that's how it's designed — to make sure that there is no impact.

The truth of it is that the property, for many years, was a dog kennel. It was also about trying to make sure that neighbours who might come nearby wouldn't get noise. It

wasn't the other way around, but now that's not the case. That's fine.

That property boundary, which is the closest to that gravel pit, is about 200 metres away from the gravel pit. Then it's a little farther until you get to where the project would be happening. It's quite a bit farther than the 50-metre buffer that is typically provided, but it still doesn't take away from the point that I think the member opposite is raising about noise. The next nearest property is about half of a kilometre away. Then you get to Kookatsoon Lake, and the properties that are along Kookatsoon Lake may be a kilometre away, but it would be easier to say they are about half a kilometre away. The reason is that, once you get through the forest and you get to the lake, sound can travel pretty quickly across the lake. I would be careful to not just use distances at that point.

What are we talking about with respect to the project? I have had the opportunity to go with the Forest Management branch to listen to the sound of the project that is being proposed. I would say that the sound is less than a chainsaw. The type of wood processing that we are talking about is a crosscut saw. There may be a genset there and that might be the loudest thing that there is.

The project is pretty far away from residences. When I went and listened to the project, what I did was I walked about 100 metres away to try to listen to it operating, and you could have a person-to-person casual conversation, and it was just fine. What we are talking about does matter, and I have had many of these conversations with the folks in Mount Lorne. I will acknowledge that there are still worries and concerns, but the biggest concern that was raised was about noise, and for this reason, I think that the project actually has some potential, because it is not that noisy.

**Ms. White:** When did the minister go to hear some of the equipment that would be used? What time of year was it? What was the temperature? I guess that I am looking for the time of year and the temperature when the minister went.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I will have to look back through my calendar, but I am pretty sure that it was in the spring; it was cool out. I don't think that it was full-on winter, but it was earlier this year, is my recollection.

**Ms. White:** Something that I always thought was really interesting as a kid is that the colder it gets, the more sound travels and how it is amplified. You can hear trees — if it gets really cold, you can hear them explode as the sap freezes. You can shout across a valley to someone on the other side of a mountain, and they can hear you perfectly well when it gets cold.

The reason I am asking what the temperature was is understanding that this proposed project would probably be processing wood for a good portion of the year, including through winter. It is different depending on the temperature. The reason why I asked the minister when it was is that sound travels differently when it is cold. Knowing that he has gone out to hear the equipment in operation and he talked about one saw and possibly a generator, has the minister taken out anyone who is concerned about the noise in the area? Has he invited

the residents out who have been writing letters and those who have been organizing against it?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am not the operator of the equipment, but I know that the local advisory council in Mount Lorne has somewhat of a ward system, and the councillor for Kookatsoon, who happens to live along Kookatsoon Road and would be the property that is the closest to the gravel pit on Kookatsoon Road, has been invited.

The last I heard is that trip hadn't happened yet. Yes, I'm aware of the differences of sound in winter. I also happen to live on a lake, so I totally know the difference — if it's a calm day on the lake, man, you can hear right across the lake; if it's not a calm day, you can't hear very far at all.

I guess that one of the ways that we can talk about this is looking at ways to ensure that — for example, if the project were to move ahead, then you could put measures in place about decibel levels. There are ways to try to make sure that the sound is not an issue. The other thing that we have discussed — I have discussed with the department and I think I have talked to the local advisory council about this and certainly some of the residents I have been in conversation with — is that, if we were to issue a permit, we would do so on a shorter term basis at first just to see how it's working and then figure out what the sound issue is.

I have talked with the councillor who lives in the area and am encouraging them to get their — I missed the local advisory council meeting just last week, because I got double-booked with something else, so I haven't had a chance to follow up since the most recent meeting, but I'm sure that I will talk to them shortly.

**Ms. White:** If there were concerns around decibel levels, does that mean that the department would supply nearby residents with meters to register them? And if there was a complaint, who would call, and who is in charge of enforcement if there were sound complaints in the area?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, the YESAB decision outlined a noise protocol or complaint protocol to be put in place, so there is something there. I'm not sure that the measure is at people's homes. I think you design the permit so that it works year-round. Then the operating equipment — that's where the sound is, I think, typically measured. You just try to design it so that it's going to be okay with neighbours.

I'm trying to say to the House that this thing we're talking about is about the sound level of a chainsaw. We are saying that the closest neighbours are more than 200 metres away. Other neighbours are 500 metres away and more. I hope, as Yukoners, that this is within our realm of okay.

How do we deal with concerns? I think it's a typical process for us. When we issue permits, I think it is our Compliance Monitoring and Inspections — sorry, I'm being told that it would be the Forest Management branch. But there would be folks who go to check it out, and if there are complaints, they would be followed up on.

**Ms. White:** I'm just going to use an anecdotal story. Off the Alaska Highway and next to a mobile home park, there is a gravel pit. A gravel pit has hours that it is allowed to operate within. If it is operating within those hours, residents who live

next door who were there before the gravel pit are told that it's just the way it is. I can say that it has really diminished people's ability to live next door.

When we talk about this proposed project, the concern is that rural residential, for example, is secluded. They bought their home with the expectation that they would be able to live there quietly. We have talked previously about the importance of these things in the past. Knowing that it's the forest resources branch that would be in charge of enforcement, there are lots of questions about what would happen if someone is operating outside. What are the warnings, the tickets, or the stop-work orders and the series of those things?

One thing that definitely was brought up when I went out there — well, there are a couple of things. I would say that the stretch of road where it is — I would ask the minister what kinds of vehicles are proposed to be going in there and what size of trucks. Are we talking about hauling? Are we talking about logging trucks — big, long, heavy loads? I say this in terms of where the gravel pit is. There is a not a whole line of sight in both directions. There is a bit of a line of sight, but it is certainly not an area that you would want to pass in. To be honest, I didn't hit the gravel pit the first time I was looking for it. Residents around there have concerns about safety. They have concerns about the highway. They have concerns about traffic. They have concerns about the state of that highway during the winter. Another thing they brought up multiple times is: Were there other areas that were proposed? They felt that this one was landed on because it was easy and government had painted themselves into a corner, and that goes back to — I would suggest, from opposition questions — having a wood yard and making sure that we can get a stockpile of greenwood so it can age and so we can have access to firewood.

The questions that I have, again, are: In this process, has the highway access been looked at from a safety lens? What kind of vehicles will be accessing it? What other areas were proposed? I would hope that there were other locations and I would like to know about those other locations.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I guess I should have invited the member to some of the LAC meetings where we talked about this a lot.

Yes, there have been — I started off by saying that the department has looked for sites at the north end of town, in the middle of town, and at the south end of town. This was deemed to be the most suitable, best site at the south end of town. Were there other considerations? Yes. As an example, there is another gravel pit further north and closer to the cut-off. That one was looked at — and why not that one? Well, number one, it is an active gravel pit, so it has other things going on with it. That was the biggest concern, but there were other concerns as well. Drainage isn't as good in that gravel pit; it wasn't as preferable for dryness. In terms of a woodlot yard, it wasn't as good.

Was the highway looked at — turning radiuses? Yes, it was and that was considered.

Was the size of trucks considered? Yes, they were.

The other way to think about it for members today is that this used to be a gravel pit. It used to have gravel trucks there.

It used to have crushing. It had noise, dust, and activity. Those things were in the past — I understand that — but we are looking for locations where we can have activities that are important for Yukoners, because I think that it is important that Yukoners have firewood. That is a good thing.

In particular, one of the things that is happening right now at the south end of town is that we are trying to reduce fuel loads. Through Wildland Fire and the Department of Community Services, there is this attempt to reduce that wildfire pressure. Rather than, for example, taking that wood, putting it in a slash pile, and burning it over the winter, we are trying to take advantage of using that energy. This is, in my mind, right there in with the whole approach to addressing climate change.

The balance, in my mind, has to do with: What are the levels of impacts that we're talking about for neighbours? How far away are those neighbours? What is reasonable? In my neighbourhood, for example, someone firing up a chainsaw is not that big a deal. It does go on pretty frequently. I suppose it might be different if it were happening day in, day out, but I have a neighbour who is right next door — or on three sides, I guess.

The sizes of the trucks — I think that they are anticipated to be in the range of about 10 to 15 cords on a truck. It will depend a bit, but there is probably a difference between the trucks in their amount as they come to the yard — which is already happening, by the way, so that yard is being used or that gravel pit is being used as a storage yard. Those trucks are coming and taking wood away at other times. If there was firewood processing there, then there would be different types of trucks hauling the wood away. I think they are smaller on the backhaul than they are on the haul to the site. Anyway, that is the rough picture.

**Ms. White:** I was invited out by neighbours, residents, and members of the LAC to that actual gravel pit to have a discussion. They wanted me to see what they were talking about and where the location was. It was helpful because it definitely puts it in place when you are standing in the spot that they are talking about, pointing out where their houses are and all those things.

There was a wood processing facility in Carcross that moved because of the disruption to neighbours. There were people who were farther away than 200 metres and it affected them deeply. Again, I will raise my concerns.

When I attended this meeting at the gravel pit, one of the things that had been mentioned by the residents — and I am trying to find the e-mail that referenced it. There is a Yukon government road back toward the Carcross Corner on the right-hand side, travelling from Carcross. They said that this was a road that had access off of it and where people were farther away and it would be less disruptive to neighbours, and they had suggested it as a possible location. Their concerns were that, from the government perspective, there was no interest in going there because there would be work required first, including probably clearing trees, which, if it was going to be a woodlot, I guess it would be an opportunity to get a few additional trees in your piles to season.

I apologize, because I don't have the kilometre marking for where this road is, but there is a very distinct Yukon government road back on the right-hand side of the highway between Carcross and the Carcross Corner, close to the Carcross Corner side. Residents had suggested that, so was that one of the areas the minister looked at? Why wasn't that one deemed suitable?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yes, there was a project that had begun during COVID — that is my recollection — with wood processing, but they didn't go through the YESAA process — let's say that. They have properties that abut their property, so let's call that "zero metres away". It's not zero metres away from where the house is to where the processing is, but what I've been trying to measure is from the edge of properties, not from houses. Finally, the type of processing they had was much noisier than the other one we are talking about now, so these are all differences.

If I understand — I mean, maybe I could look on a map with the member opposite afterward and try to talk through where the various places are that I think we are talking about, but yes, from talking with the local advisory council, there was a suggestion to use the gravel pit which is north of the proposed gravel pit. It is the one that I described. First of all, the Forest Management branch did seek that out. They did try to assess it as a potential site. Number one, it didn't come out as the best site, and number two, it had a conflict. When I met with the LAC, it was requested again. I went back. I asked the deputy minister to go speak with the Deputy Minister of Highways and Public Works to assess whether it would be a more suitable location. Again, there was a review done and another response sent to me about why it was not the better choice. It was not a suitable choice.

So, there has been continued effort to try to seek other solutions. It is hard to find a location where no one has a concern. That's easy for me to say. This is an important thing. Then I think it comes down to that balance. I acknowledge the concerns that have been raised by the residents, but in trying to look at them and weigh them against the advantage that would come from having access to more wood — especially more wood that is being removed from the landscape because of the risk it poses, so to try to find a use for that wood which could displace fossil fuels and at the same time weighing what the impact is — it is running equipment that makes roughly the sound of a chainsaw and which is a couple of hundred metres away from the nearest residence. Yes, that is what we are talking about. It was the best solution that the Forest Management branch could come up with for a location for such a yard. That is how it was judged, and yes, there was effort put into trying to find alternate locations.

**Ms. White:** I will be sure to send that information out to folks who have — well, continue to send e-mails of their concerns around it. I think their concerns stand. I am happy to hear what the minister's thoughts are on the matter, but I will change topics.

On May 13, 2023, the *Yukon News* had an article that says: "Ombudsman finds Yukon government policy unfair — Jason Pedlar has found unfairness in Energy, Mines and Resources

department's lot enlargement policy." He stated that there were no clear criteria for accepting or rejecting an application and that it lacked transparency and consistency. I am hoping that the minister can share with Yukoners changes to this policy to make it more fair and to make it more transparent so that when folks are going through the process of looking at getting their lot split, it's clear — that they understand ahead of time what the limitations or requirements are. So, again, this was a finding from the Ombudsman this spring, and I'm just looking for where we're at — an update on that from the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I am just asking the department for an update, and I will just suggest that if we keep moving with questions, if I get some information, I will make sure to share it when I get back up on my feet.

**Ms. White:** For sure, and just for clarity, the news article talks about a complainant who is asking to make their lot larger and then the process that went on. I mean, I can read the article when we get back to it, but I will wait for the minister.

One of the — also talking about lots, actually, the confidence and supply agreement includes a commitment by the Yukon government to reform the land lottery system through a public engagement. Is there any update on this? When will the engagement begin? Will reforms be ready for the building season of 2024?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I can say that, with respect to the lot enlargement policy being revised to meet the Ombudsman review findings, I am just asking the department what the timing looks like on that. Second, there are two things that are happening with respect to the lottery system for lots. The first one is the deeper one, I guess, which I will talk about. We are doing successor legislation for lands. When we were close with that and then when we started the successor mineral legislation, First Nations asked us to reset and use that process as well for lands. We agreed, but that will have a public engagement portion to it, so — I don't know — I think the timing is next year on the public engagement piece that will be there.

Second of all, we have been working with the City of Whitehorse. They asked us to adjust how the lottery system works, because they had heard concerns. We used a process through a city committee that made some suggestions. We have been doing some tweaks in between now and then to try to improve the system in the interim.

I just received a note from the department, and they are expecting the lot enlargement policy to have its update done this coming spring.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that answer and for the officials behind the scenes who were looking for that answer.

I can't remember, honestly, if it was during Question Period or during budget debate, since that all kind of meshes together at a certain point in time, but the minister had indicated that — so, concerns had been raised at the beginning of October that buyers of residential lots were stuck in limbo all of a sudden after being able to access their Whistle Bend lots. The minister indicated that they would not be charged the interest on those lots before construction. I'm just looking for clarity.

My understanding was that buyers were accruing interest on lots that they could not access when they opted to pay in installments and that the interest is paid directly to Yukon government. I believe that the minister had said or alluded that there was a solution in the works for that. I'm just looking for clarity on that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** When this was first drawn to my attention, I just asked the department to not charge interest. Unfortunately, it's legislated, so it became a problem. Then I asked the department: Can you please try to find a work around for these folks?

So, yes, they are doing that work to find some way to rebate the money to the landowners. The construction completion certificate was — they happened in two chunks. One group of them was done by September 21, and the second group was done by October 6. All of those — it is lots in phase 6B. They are all now accessible, but folks missed a building season, effectively. Interest would be charged to them in May of the following year. So, that is when it would come due — that interest. What I have asked is that the department have a solution for those folks before that point so that they are not out, effectively. Unfortunately, we couldn't just do a quick adjustment to it, because it is legislated.

**Ms. White:** Madam Chair, I thank the minister for that, and I wish the people trying to find the solution Godspeed in that work. It may be a significant or insignificant amount of money, but for what it means for the individuals who will be paying it, it is important, and so I wish them luck in the work — in figuring that out.

Funding for organizations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — for example, renewable resources councils, Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and land use planning commissions — my understanding is that the funding for those boards ends in March 2024, that it comes through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. I am just wondering if a solution has been found ahead of — we are told all the time that the government is planning next year's budget, and I just wanted to make sure that this had been addressed ahead of that funding running out.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I was referencing this issue earlier when I was talking with the Member for Copperbelt South. The funding for this is wrapped up in that whole ongoing dialogue with the Government of Canada under the land claims implementation funding. I might have the name wrong — the title of that wrong — but that is essentially what it is, and it is the Executive Council Office that is the lead, so the Premier is the lead in this dialogue with counterparts federally.

Wrapped up in that is land use planning, land use planning implementation, et cetera, so that's where that funding lies. I understand those conversations to be ongoing with the federal government.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that clarification.

One of the challenges — and I realize that it has been two years since my responsibilities changed and I'm not the critic of 50 percent of everything, but often my departments cross and I forget which department is responsible for what thing because, at one point in time, I had a good half of everything.

At times, it was confusing and one of the challenges that I find myself in is with the Better Buildings program, because it's partially under Community Services, which I am still a critic for, and the other half is under Energy, Mines and Resources, which I am also still a critic for, but at times, I ask the wrong questions of the wrong minister.

I have, at this point in time, talked with the Minister of Community Services about the Better Buildings program, so now here I am talking to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about the Better Buildings program. I know that last time I was in Community Services, I had been told that 55 applications were made and that the total value of those applications was — or maybe the ones accepted were \$292,000. Anyway, I am just looking for an update. Maybe the minister would like to walk me through it again.

How many applications have been made? What is the total value of those applications? How many were accepted and how many were rejected or had to be pushed back a year? How much is left in the budget for this year for those applications to the Better Buildings program?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Only in the Yukon — there are now 56 applications.

Can I also, just for a second — and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has been kind with her remarks and I would just like to echo them. The public servants who do all this work in the background try to provide us with the information and deliver the services — there is a lot of work that they do and it goes unsung most of the time. Today, I would like to sing their praises along with the member opposite. I really appreciate the hard work that they have done.

With respect to the Better Buildings loan program, the public-facing part of it is Energy, Mines and Resources. That's the part where Yukoners go and talk to the Energy branch and deal with them. It's just in the background where we are dealing with local improvement charges that we are working with municipalities on, so that's where Community Services comes in.

There has only been one application so far that has been denied, and that's because of their tax status. That's the note I have. I am not sure what that means exactly, but generally speaking, people are getting through the program. Not everyone is choosing to follow up. The cost of borrowing is high right now and it's challenging to find a contractor. There are a lot of folks who are busy out there.

\$291,000 is what I have as being committed to date under the program. There is lots of room for that program right now and we will continue to work with Yukoners to try to promote it.

**Ms. White:** I do thank the minister for that.

Now, understanding that only one application was rejected, out of the 56 applications, how many are currently going forward? How many are kind of in a holding pattern? I am just trying to look for an understanding of where we are out of those 56 applications, knowing that one has been rejected.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The note that I have for today is that seven have completed — or nearly completed — their projects. That's where the \$291,000 comes from. I have a note



that says that several of the 56 applicants decided not to proceed, and the reasons were ones that I have just given. Other ones were that they had been approved, but we were unaware of the status of whether they are moving or not. We will continue to follow up with them, of course, but that is part of the challenge right now. What I would say is that 55 of those projects are still in the works, but only a handful of them have their work underway to a point where they have been coming back to us to get the dollars for the project. Some of them may have started and we don't know yet, but that's just the difficulty of the project.

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

It is a really interesting time to see, in the last number of years, the number of photovoltaic panels that have gone up on roofs — solar panels, of course.

I've talked on more than one occasion in here about Tony Seba, who is an energy disruption specialist. His point always was that the more a technology was utilized and put into work, the price would come down. We have seen that with solar panels. I wanted to know if there was a certain point where the microgeneration program for solar — where we would top out.

Partially, I ask this question in terms of having done a tour of the Yukon Energy complex. I actually went up into what I can only describe as a very stressful room with people who control the entire energy grid from one spot and learned from them that clouds in one area of town can actually affect Yukon's energy generation, because they don't actually know where all the microgeneration projects are. They can't tell if they are in a cluster. They don't know if one area, depending on the weather, will go down and that would affect their need to bring up, for example, the hydro.

I'm just looking to find out if there is a time when the microgeneration program will not have room for additional solar projects or if there is an unlimited amount of space for that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I got a report the other day that Natural Resources Canada does to try to assess renewable energy comparisons across Canada. The Yukon came out second in Canada for solar. We've exceeded what our target was, so we're about to pause the program.

One of the things that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King was discussing which is a real issue that we have to watch — I just was invited to meetings with ATCO and Yukon Energy to talk about the grid system writ large and how we are trying to upgrade it over time. As the system is developed now, I think ATCO is starting to look at more smart metres. There is a better term for it than what we usually call it, but the whole point is to try to then know where those resources are and what you can do with them.

There is a move to develop distributed energy resources through your grid — like, eventually, the batteries that people will use in their electric vehicles could become a resource for a utility, if done well. This is where things are moving and we understand that it is changing.

The microgeneration program has moved faster and further than we anticipated. We need to see how it will work with our grid as we change our grid. The utilities are saying to me right

now that it's time for us to press pause, review that program, and redesign what it should look like on a go-forward basis and where we should take it from there. This is part of that whole move toward our transitioning of the energy system across — and in anticipation of the demand that is coming as we move off of fossil fuels.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that. I'm not surprised to know that the Yukon is second. We are often leading in our early adaptation and I think people here try to do their part. I mean, the real challenge, of course, when we talk about solar panels is that additional power is generated when we don't really need it. So, the next question is: What microgeneration program will come online that will help us generate electricity in the winter months, the snowy months, the cold months? That is really why it's so exciting to see the four turbines on the top of Haeckel Hill.

My former colleague Jim Tredger came to that meeting — the opening, actually. I have to say that in the first five years after I was elected, the discussion around wind wasn't kind. I didn't think that we would ever get to the point where we would see it, and I'm glad we are. I have been told that there are up to 400 megawatts in the territory for wind — that we could look at having installations across that would really bolster our system, which I think is something that we have to look toward.

Understanding that we are getting close to topping out on the microgeneration program, my understanding is that, with the IPP, we have reached our limit for solar generation and that we are now looking for projects that are joint — so maybe solar and battery storage or things.

I don't think that is a bad thing — to know that we set a goal and we have reached it and in some cases exceeded it. I don't think that is a bad thing. I think that it is just a matter of trying to find that technology. I really believe that technology is going to help us out here — the technology that helps us generate in the winter.

One of the things that I have discussed previously is that — I really — and I appreciate that the minister talked about smart meters, because really, both utilities have tried to go forward with smart meter programs, and they have both been shut down at the Yukon Utilities Board. So, that is a problem when we talk about demand-side management and we talk about our ability to utilize and control our power. I look forward to that.

I am a person who signs up for all the pilot projects, so I was part of the initial pilot project around water heaters, but sadly, the company went under during COVID. I told Yukon Energy at first to just leave my meter there; it's fine. But when it finally did something funny and shut off my water heater, I asked them to come and take it off, but I am signed up to be on the new project, and hopefully, the next company will have better luck.

One of the things that there has been a big move for — and I am grateful for that as well — is going toward the air source heat pumps. It is interesting, because I can look at Twitter — now known as "X" — and other communication out of Alberta and other jurisdictions that are talking about: Are heat pumps really — will they work in northern climates? I chuckle a bit,

because my heat pump was installed in 2016, but my dad's first heat pump was installed in the 1990s — long before it was tried or tested here.

Again, when I got my heat pump installed, the fantastic folks at the Energy branch installed a meter, because we were looking to collect actual, factual information as opposed to just anecdotal stories as to whether or not they worked. I am happy to be part of that, and it was wild to see that the rebate that I got in 2016 was \$500. I shook my arms a lot and said that it was really not enough for the \$32,000 I have just spent in trying to do this, and I got up to \$1,500, which was three times the amount. So, to see the program now where it is 30 percent, up to \$8,000, is huge and to know that, when I started, I was the only heat pump on my block. I can walk down the alley between two streets, and there are six heat pumps now between Antwerp and Cassino, the back end of Cassino, which is great, but there are concerns around that, and my colleague from Whitehorse Centre brought it up in discussion with Yukon Energy. I have brought it up before, and I will bring it up again: There are people who would like to get off fossil fuels, but when they are told that they have to upgrade the transformer on the power line to the tune of \$50,000-plus, it seems a bit steep.

I can say again, on an individual purpose, that I got to install my very own power pole for \$3,000. I did, at the time, tell ATCO that I was marrying myself for the rest of time by installing a heat pump, but I still got to install a power pole. I have called it “my power pole”, and they have corrected me, saying that actually it is their power pole, but I say, “I bought it”, so the discussion goes on.

I can't imagine that I would have wanted to install my very own transformer for that, so maybe the minister has some thoughts about what kind of work is being done with the utility. But as we try to encourage and support people to make different decisions, knowing that we get stuck in a process where they are told that the only way forward is with that kind of investment to the utility which is a for-profit business is really a hard, bitter pill to swallow. I will give the minister a chance to add some thoughts there, and I will move on to my next question.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There are a few things I want to say, and thanks for all of that.

First of all, solar and battery is great, but it's not so great for the winter, really. The member opposite will know, because she heard me, when I was at the ribbon-cutting event of Thäy Tāw — the Haeckel Hill wind project — I heard the Chu Níikwān say, “Let's build the next one”, and I said, “Yes, the next one should be wind and battery.” That's right, because if we get wind and battery — and I said this earlier during Question Period — then we have firmer power. I wouldn't quite call it a “baseload”, but it gets us much closer so that the amount of diesel you need in order to make it baseload is much, much less. When we are talking about our off-grid communities, solar is great for there, so whether it is Watson Lake or Beaver Creek, solar is terrific, because it's offsetting against diesel.

Yes, we definitely want more integrated solutions. Yes, there is pressure on the system, and for those early adopters, sometimes they are moving out in front. The member talked

about a rebate of \$500 and then \$1,500, and now it's \$8,000, but when we combine that with the federal program — and we have been working with the federal government to be able to combine our programs so that we could be the one-window shop for the rebates, that we can be the deliverer of the federal program — they have been receptive to that.

Sorry, I am referring to heat pumps now. It will make it seamless for Yukoners. My shop told me that there were some challenges with Yukoners navigating through the federal system, and if we combine our programs, it will make it more accessible for Yukoners.

By the way, just to make sure that I say it here publicly, heat pumps do work in the Yukon — I agree with the member opposite — at minus 15 degrees, which is our average winter temperature. They are twice as efficient as any other heating system. They are going to cost you half as much to provide the same amount of energy. It's amazing.

At minus 30 degrees is when they get about as efficient as our other systems. They get less efficient as you get colder, but that's still a pretty good bang for your buck. As my wife and I drove into town, we were discussing heat pumps. What a great world. I know that the Minister of Environment and I have signed up for the peak smart program, so just a shout-out to Yukon Energy for getting that program back up and running. I encourage all Yukoners to get there.

Let me just return again to the overall grid that we have. It does need to be overhauled; it really does. For example, as we build subdivisions that have more electric heat load — when the power goes out and they come back on, it's like a big hit all of a sudden, because there is just this huge demand for electricity in a rush. We do need systems that are going to allow us to feather on one street at a time and get them back up so it doesn't overload the system as it comes back up.

We are going to need to upgrade things as people put more vehicle charging in their homes or heat pumps so that our transformers can take it. There is a massive backlog on transformers across North America — well, probably across the world. I am told that what used to take a couple of months now takes closer to a year. So, the planning has to be done more deeply.

All this is to say that I appreciate the challenges that individuals experience when they lead on some of this stuff, but I do know that the utilities are looking at this as a whole-of-system approach. We have asked that they be in conversation at all times with the Energy branch, with not just Yukon Energy but ATCO, and, for that matter, the university, because there are some smart cookies up there — Dr. Michael Ross and his team — who do energy planning and an assessment for the north, so that's a very useful group to be working with.

Anyway, there is a lot of work out there being done right now to think about the system upgrade. I think I mentioned earlier the direct energy resource. It is one of those things that our utilities specialists say will be an important way to smooth out the capacity peak that is growing.

Lots of work, and yes, there will be challenges as we go through that and if I can call them “hiccups” along the way as we move forward, but the utilities are working together to try

to make that as seamless as possible, because we can see that transition is coming.

**Ms. White:** I'll again highlight that I don't believe that the customers should be paying for those investments in that infrastructure, which is part of what the problem is now. I'll just leave that there.

The minister and I received an e-mail from my friend Dave Weir out of Haines Junction, and I think it's really important. I'm going to read part of the letter in, because it's a real-world example of a family who is making a really important decision toward electric vehicles.

A couple years ago, they bought their first electric car, which was a Chevy Bolt. They have been impressed by the Bolt. They say that it's really easy to charge, and they're grateful for the charging network across the Yukon, and they think that a super job has been done. Fast-forward and we get to the point where the Ford Lightning comes online. Dave is a carpenter in Haines Junction. He does a lot of work in Haines Junction.

He makes the decision that he is going to sell his favourite, like, Toyota Tacoma, which he uses all of the time for runs to Whitehorse to pick up supplies, and he is going to park the diesel truck and he is going to 100 percent use a Ford Lightning for the purposes. Interesting things that I will put out there — and hopefully the minister can petition the federal government. If you get an electric vehicle with a bigger battery, it is viewed as a luxury vehicle — maybe a luxury if you live in downtown Toronto, but if you live in the Yukon and not in Whitehorse, it's probably not a luxury; it's probably a necessity.

The Ford Lightning that he got was the basic package, but it had the bigger battery, and therefore, he didn't qualify for the federal funding. That is just an aside. Hopefully, this government can petition the other government to talk about what is truly luxury and what isn't luxury.

He says that he thinks that, in order for the Yukon to hit the target of 45-percent electric vehicles, we're really going to have to tackle pickup trucks, and I don't disagree with that at all. I had my heart set on, at one point in my life, a Rivian — I'm not sure why I'm fixated on a Rivian, but I really am.

I'm just going to read directly from his letter now: "In driving my Lightning over the last couple of months I have made a couple of observations about our charging network, observations that I did not make while driving our Bolt. I would like to pass these on to you, in the spirit of trying to make our vehicle charging network the best it can be, and increase our chances of reaching 45%.

"I drive to Whitehorse about once a week in my Lightning to pick up supplies and run errands. I often pull a trailer in order to maximize what I can haul back to Haines Junction. It has become apparent to me that the chargers in Whitehorse leave a lot to be desired if you have a truck and trailer. The chargers at the Tourist Info Centre and the charger at Yukonstruct can not be used when you have a trailer attached to your vehicle. The charger at the Transportation Museum can be used with a trailer only if there are very few vehicles in the parking lot. Indeed, rural chargers in general seem to be better set up for trailers than the chargers in Whitehorse. Of the rural chargers I have

used so far, Haines Junction, Mendenhall, and Pelly are passable for a trailer, and Stewart Crossing is excellent. To use the chargers in Whitehorse, I often have to take my trailer off and leave it at Wal-Mart while I charge. It seems to me we are in need of urban chargers that can be used with a trailer attached.

"Secondly, driving a Lightning with an extended range battery it of course takes a while longer to charge my truck than it did to charge our Bolt. Often the 1 hour time limit on the chargers is not adequate to get enough charge to make the next step on my journey. More typically, 1.5 hrs or more is needed and I find myself charging first at Yukonstruct then going to the Tourist Info Centre and charging again. This is particularly true in a place like Mendenhall where the charger is only a 25kW charger. It seems to me that we are in need of higher powered chargers and/or longer time limits on at least some chargers.

"Lastly, I often find myself competing with Whitehorse residents for the use of chargers, and returning multiple times to find a charger that is available. I find this particularly annoying because more often than not, Whitehorsians have the option of charging at home and are using the public chargers to save a few dollars. For those of us from the communities, we often have no choice but to use the public chargers in order to be able to get home. Even with the extended range battery and without a trailer, at an air temperature below 0 degrees or so I can not make it to Whitehorse and back without charging my truck. I find myself wishing that the free public chargers were not free so as to decrease their use by folks that have a choice to charge at home.

"To illustrate my points, I will relate the charging history of a trip I recently made to Whitehorse, towing my cargo trailer with air temperatures in the range of -12 to -15. I charged the truck to 100% before departure. I stopped in Mendenhall on the way in to top up the battery and charged for a half hour or so at the 25 kW charger. I continued to Whitehorse and picked up the supplies I needed. I then went to Wall Mart, disconnected my trailer and charged at both downtown chargers (waiting for 20 minutes at Yukonstruct) for a combined total of 1.75 hrs to bring my battery up to 90% (the highest it will charge with a fast charger). On the way home I stopped at Mendenhall to charge for a total of 2 hours (it takes a long time on the 25 kW charger) to make it home. I arrived home with about 60 km of range left on my battery, comfortable but not a huge safety margin. And in case you are wondering, I keep the cab of the truck at 15.5 degrees, just enough to keep the windshield clear.

"I relate this story because I think that it illustrates that the current state of the charging network in Yukon isn't adequate for a lot of the users that are going to need to convert to electric vehicles in order for us to meet our 45% emission reduction target."

He is so kind in this e-mail because he says: "I hope you will consider my suggestions, and I hope that you feel free to contact me if I can be of any help or provide any clarification."

The interesting thing and the reason, partially, that I wanted to read this into the record was that I don't have an electric vehicle currently and I am not towing a trailer, so I

wouldn't have known — I wouldn't have thought about it — until he pointed it out that the visitor information centre works for cars, but it certainly doesn't work for trailers.

YuKonstruct, when you think about it, doesn't work for towing. The Yukon Transportation Museum could work if there weren't cars parked behind it.

One of his suggestions partially ties into T7 of *Our Clean Future*, which is about legislation to allow private businesses or maybe even the Yukon government to sell electricity at the charging stations.

I know that we are almost out of time. I will let the minister go. I will give him the floor, and hopefully Dave's concerns can be addressed.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Let me give a shout-out to the public, like Dave for his letter. Yes, I got it, and by the way, I know that the Energy branch has written back to him thanking him. I know that they have set up meetings to sit down and talk with him to try to work through some of these things.

I know that we have a good initial charging system, but yes, we need to grow it. I listened to CBC Radio this morning and they were talking about bike parking and maybe how it needs to be tweaked. This is just an example of that for our folks who are going to drive electric trucks.

By the way, I think that the issue with the federal government is not about the size of the battery; it's about the cost of the vehicle. That is what they use as their threshold. We will be sure to have those conversations. I was actually on a call today with the Minister of Natural Resources Canada on another issue.

Lastly, to Dave's suggestion about when we start charging, I have asked the department to accelerate that and bring it back to me more quickly, because I think it is an important part in our progress on this.

Again, the Yukon has been ahead of the curve in this adoption. It is amazing to me to see where the Yukon is with respect to renewables broadly but, in this case, electric vehicles. I am impressed with their keenness around this issue. We will continue to invest in our infrastructure to make sure that it will match that focus from the public.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

## Chair's report

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 211, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.*

## The following legislative returns were tabled November 15, 2023:

35-1-108

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to a ministerial statement re: Minto mine closure and reclamation (Streicker)

35-1-109

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 53, Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — miners' liens (Streicker)

## The following document was filed November 15, 2023:

35-1-166

Working definition of anti-Semitism, letter re (dated May 2, 2023) from Currie Dixon, Leader of the Official Opposition to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Justice (Dixon)