



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

---

Number 162

1<sup>st</sup> Session

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

---

## HANSARD

Wednesday, November 22, 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 22, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**Withdrawal of motions**

**Speaker:** The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motions have been completed in whole or in part: Motions No. 795 and 828, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Are there any visitors to be introduced?

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, there are a few visitors. I will do my very best to acknowledge and welcome many visitors here today who care deeply about housing and I would like to welcome them to the Assembly. I will go through everybody and then we can give our applause.

First is Chief Amanda Leas from the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. It's great to see you.

From the Yukon Housing staff, we have: Marcel Holder Robinson, director of Finance and Risk Management; Christie Richardson, manager of loans and grants; Daniel Jirousek, manager of Finance and Risk Management; Jyotika Dangwal, policy analyst; Paul Zylstra, acting director of tenancy supports; Colin McDowell, vice-president of Operations; and Beth Fricke, vice-president of Corporate Services.

As well, from the Safe at Home Society, we have: their leader, Kate Mechan; Anthony Boisvert; Andrea Magun; Sarah Kroon; Heidi Slat; Elske de Visch Eybergen; and Naomi Dunaway.

We have: from Habitat for Humanity, Suzanne Greening; from the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Kristina Craig; Michelle Watson from Yukon Energy Food Security Network; Deserine Grimes from the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition; Jason Charlie from Voices Influencing Change; Jack Bogaard from Voices/Lived Experience; Lauren Manekin-Beille is also here; and Keith Welch and Kristen Sinclair.

Welcome to everyone today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to help me welcome a number of people who are here for our tribute to the Festival of Trees. I apologize — I am sure we will have missed someone.

Welcome today Wendy Tayler and Lacia Kinnear from Alkan Air and Christian Roldan and Jennie Gjersten from Newmont. We also have with us Eva Bidrman, Amanda Leslie, R.J. Hill, and, of course, I see Joe Iles here, Frank Curlew — welcome — and Karen Forward, the president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation.

Thank you all for joining us.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming a member of our Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues — the title will be changing soon. I would like to welcome Judy Hartling.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, later on, I will be tabling the Yukon Lottery Commission annual report, and so I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming to the gallery Sara Skelton, the chair and chief executive officer of the Yukon Lottery Commission, and also Matt Ordish, general manager of Lotteries Yukon.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, just to add to the Alkan bunch, I have known in different lifetimes and flown, of course, to Wolverine by one of the pilots — Jeff Faulkner is here and, of course, Leif Austad is also joining us from Alkan Air.

*Applause*

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I will just add in some folks as well. I see that Jeff Faulkner and Leif Austad are here from Alkan as well; Elaine Smart, a former volunteer with the Festival of Trees; I see Kerry Newkirk from Northwestel; and the founding president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, Vanessa Innes, is here, as well as her daughter, Brittany Dixon, who happens to be my wife.

*Applause*

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I just also noticed that the chief executive officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, Jason Bilsky, is also with us and I would ask members to welcome him.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Tributes.

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of National Housing Day**

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to National Housing Day. Home is more than mere bricks and mortar or a physical address. At its core, the home is a sanctuary, a place of refuge and comfort. It is where we find solace after a long day, where we create lasting memories with our loved ones, and where we are safe to truly be ourselves.

Since 2020, Yukon Housing Corporation has added 60 affordable housing units to our portfolio, which is now a host

to 898 units across the Yukon. We also will have an additional 152 units to be completed in the coming years.

Yukon Housing Corporation has supported over 1,500 new housing completions since 2018 as well through our varied loans, grant programs, and partnerships. Through the deployment of the Canada-Yukon housing benefit, we have also supported over 300 households to pay their rent and 1,150 households through our rental programs. This government has worked hard to release new lots across the Yukon and, since 2018, has released 760 lots for people to build their dreams on.

Despite all of that hard work done by this government, we realize it's not enough. We will continue to work to provide varied housing options for Yukoners across the housing continuum. To those in need of safe and affordable housing, we see you. We are working with you and making progress along with local housing partners. Allied support is so critical to moving forward. Together — and only together — we can look to building healthy communities and to invest in our collective future where everyone has a place to call home.

Yukoners have a range of housing needs. I hear the call across the territory by community leaders that this is our collective responsibility and that we must have a coordinated and collaborative approach to meet those needs. When it comes to supporting Yukoners in core housing need, I would like to pay tribute to our housing partners who are working hand in hand to meet the growing demand across the territory. To the non-profit organizations and the front-line staff working toward sustainable and holistic housing solutions for our most vulnerable people — the Council of Yukon First Nations, Connective, the Safe at Home Society, Opportunities Yukon, FASSY, Blood Ties, and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, to name a few — your hard work and dedication is unparalleled. Thank you.

To Yukon First Nations and municipalities whose work to increase the availability of land and housing stock has led to the release of over 300 residential lots and the creation of more than 300 new units since the spring of 2022, we thank you. To our federal colleagues at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for providing new housing options and to the homeowners adding rental suites and the contractors building the territory's new homes, we thank you.

The contributions by all of our partners, small and large, bring us closer to providing safe and affordable housing within reach for all Yukoners.

*Applause*

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize National Housing Day. National Housing Day falls on November 22 and has been acknowledged since the year 2000. This day is dedicated to raising awareness about housing and homelessness across Canada, understanding that the importance of housing is not just the roof and the four walls but the foundation of stability and well-being.

Access to housing is essential to a community. It is where families thrive and children learn and grow. A safe and secure home gives us the stability to face life's challenges and fully

participate with a positive impact in society. Despite its importance, many people across Canada and here in the Yukon still struggle to find a safe and stable place to call home. We continue to see an increase in population bringing an increased demand for homes. With this increased demand, the cost of homes has also risen, making it difficult and in some cases unattainable for individuals to buy a home. This puts a massive strain on the rental market. With the cost of homes rising, fewer rentals are coming on the market and rent itself has continued to increase. The impacts of the housing affordability crisis are felt throughout the community by buyers and renters. This along with the rising cost of living and rapid inflation have made it hard on so many individuals and families.

National Housing Day is a reminder of the importance of safe, secure, and stable housing for individuals and communities to thrive.

Salamat po.

*Applause*

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP on National Housing Day to speak to the critical role of housing in the Yukon.

The 2023 point-in-time homelessness count revealed that 197 individuals self-identified as being homeless or underhoused. That number was up by 30 percent from the previous count two years earlier. We know that there is at times a years-long wait-list for Yukon Housing. We know that the emergency shelter is overcrowded, but for many, it is the only option. Shelters are not homes.

We know that there are people living in their cars or living in abusive or unsafe housing who have no other option. Others are living rough in tents even through the winter. Unsafe housing is not a home.

We know that local hotels have become housing for people in the winter months, but this is unsuitable and unstable. By spring, they must once again find new housing. A hotel is not a home.

We know that for many, couch surfing is a reality. A couch is not a home.

Today, we recognize all the people, organizations, First Nation governments and development corporations, and all levels of government working hard to support and provide safe housing in a situation where there is so little available, and we thank you so sincerely for that work.

To all the people who don't have safe, stable, affordable places to call home, we see you and we won't stop fighting for you. We know that housing is a human right.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of the Northwestel Festival of Trees**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to recognize the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Northwestel Festival of Trees, which runs from November 23 to December 2 of this year. I am truly excited to be able to bring this tribute to the House today.

Tomorrow, the festival kicks off the holiday season with the Newmont BAH Humbug cocktail party here in the Jim

Smith Building. The festival combines fun, wonder, and the spirit of giving. Each year, beautiful trees and wreaths are auctioned to raise money for the Yukon Hospital Foundation. As our community gathers under twinkling lights, we see the true generosity of Yukoners.

Since the festival began in 2003, it has raised over \$8 million. In the past 20 years, the Northwestel Festival of Trees has funded critical medical imaging tools in our hospitals, such as ultrasound machines, a CT scanner, an MRI scanner, a medical simulation centre, and, most recently, updates to our pediatric unit at Whitehorse General Hospital. This year, proceeds will support the Building Better Together campaign with a \$2-million donation toward the cost of a new 12-bed mental health unit at Whitehorse General Hospital.

These festival events would not be possible without Northwestel, the Yukon Hospital Foundation, local businesses, sponsors, and many volunteers who offer their time and dedication to these amazing events that make life better for Yukoners and improve the quality of care. This year, you can bid on stunning trees that are donated for auction by local businesses or an organization. There are dozens of Yukoners who volunteer their time and creativity to decorate the trees.

On behalf of all Yukoners who get to enjoy their work, thank you. Thank you to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and Karen Forward. They do an incredible job of organizing the Festival of Trees. Thank you to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and President Karen Forward, who do an incredible job of organizing the Festival of Trees. Our entire community gets to appreciate and enjoy your work.

I have it on good authority that Santa will be at the Skookum Asphalt Santa breakfast this Saturday, November 25 in the lobby of this building. Saturday night is cocktails and crafts at The Mini Makerspace in the Horwood's Mall. You can see sparkly trees in the Jim Smith Building during the day on November 24, 27, and 28. December 1 is the Save on Foods Seniors Soiree. Then the festival peaks on December 2 with the Alkan Air Grand Ball, which is sold out again this year.

You can also support the festival online with 50/50 tickets. The winner is announced on December 14. If you need to be enticed, last year's jackpot was over \$121,000. Thank you to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and all their partners and sponsors in making an important difference to all Yukoners and for giving us so many ways to contribute and celebrate at this wonderful time of the year.

*Applause*

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Northwestel Festival of Trees.

Back in 2003, I was invited by Vanessa Innes to have coffee with her and former MLA Doug Phillips to talk about a fundraiser for the hospital. The Close to our Hearts campaign was raising funds to purchase cardiac monitoring equipment for Whitehorse General so people would no longer have to travel Outside for this diagnostic care.

Doug and I co-chaired that campaign, and thanks to the overwhelming generosity of Yukoners, it was successful

beyond anyone's imagination. So many sponsors have been around since the start, like Pelly Construction, Alkan Air, Air North, Yukon's Airline, and, of course, Northwestel, and since those very early years, the Yukon Hospital Foundation has been officially established. New sponsors have joined along the way, like Nuway Crushing, Skookum Asphalt, Newmont Mining, and Save-on-Foods.

Through the years, the list of equipment purchases includes a CT scanner, Canada's first MRI north of 60, operating room and pediatric equipment, digital X-ray, and this year's support for the new 12-bed mental wellness unit through the foundation's Building Better Together campaign.

Hundreds of individuals have played an important role in this over the years, too numerous to mention here today, but I would like to honour four people who have sadly passed away but who played such an important role in the success of the event.

In 2004, Barry Bellchambers converted the old Lions swimming pool into a convention centre, which became home to the festival for many years. After an absence due to the pandemic, once again this year, patrons will be dancing in the deep end; Paul Flaherty, former CEO of Northwestel, was a huge champion of this event and a similar one in Yellowknife; Barry Watson, former owner of Alkan Air, was there from the start, and now the company, with Wendy Tayler and Jeff Faulkner at the helm, sponsors the Grand Ball; and finally, our friend Travis Adams, from Nuway Crushing, a huge supporter of this event in every way possible.

We miss them all, but their legacy lives on in this event and its impact on the community. So many great festivals have happened over the years, but for me personally, 2006 was definitely the most memorable. Amanda and I worked at the Seniors Soiree on the Friday; we worked the grand ball and auction on the Saturday; we delivered trees with Frank and Elaine on the Sunday; and then we got married on the Monday. So, it was a pretty crazy four days for us.

This year, the Hospital Foundation chair, Tammy April, the president, Karen Forward, and my wife, Amanda Leslie, are putting together a great event. It all starts tomorrow with the Newmont BAH Humbug in the foyer of this building; the Skookum Asphalt Santa Breakfast is on Saturday; and next Friday and Saturday are the Save-on-Foods Seniors Soiree and the Alkan Air Grand Ball.

There are many ways to contribute and support the event, including through an online silent auction, which opens tomorrow, or buying a 50/50 ticket online. I encourage Yukoners to take time to view the wonderful trees at the amazing venues and the dozens and dozens of amazing items donated by caring individuals, organizations, and businesses.

As the Yukon Hospital Foundation reminds us, we can do a lot if we all do a little. So, congratulations to everyone on 20 years, and here's to two more decades of caring for our community.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the beauty and the wonder that is the Northwestel

Festival of Trees. For 20 years, Northwestel has hosted a week-long series of events in support of the Yukon Hospital Foundation. The Yukon Hospital Foundation raises funds to improve the quality of health care for all Yukoners. The dollars raised by Yukoners for Yukoners stay in the territory and support so many. Every dollar given is used to support the area of greatest need.

With this year's festival, there are many ways to kick off the holiday season, from cocktail parties to breakfast with Santa, the Seniors Soiree, and, of course, the pinnacle of fancy dress in the territory, the Alkan Air Grand Ball. So, if you love trees decorated with lights and all sorts of creativity, this enchanted wonderland is for you. You can go and see the trees at the Sternwheeler Hotel from November 24 until December 3.

A big thank you to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and all of their sponsors for the work that they do in supporting the health of our territory.

*Applause*

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** Under Tabling Returns and Documents, the Chair has for tabling, pursuant to section 18 of the *Human Rights Act*, the Yukon Human Rights Commission annual report for 2022-23.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 8(2) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I have for tabling the Public Accounts for the 2022-23 fiscal year. I also have for tabling the Yukon Lottery Commission annual report.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 23(2) of the *Housing Corporation Act*, I have for tabling the Yukon Housing Corporation annual report for 2022-23.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Pursuant to section 15(3) of the *Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act*, I have for tabling the board's annual report for 2022-23. Mr. Speaker, this is the last year that this report will be tabled under this name. Going forward, it will be tabled under the Yukon Advisory Council on Women and Gender Equity.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the annual report respecting the administration of the Yukon health care insurance plan, which is tabled pursuant to section 6 of the *Health Care Insurance Plan Act*.

I also have for tabling the annual report respecting the administration of the hospital insurance plan, which is tabled pursuant to section 7 of the *Hospital Insurance Services Act*.

I also have for tabling the crime prevention and victim services trust annual report 2022-23, which is tabled pursuant to section 9 of the *Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Act*.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling two legislative returns relating to questions raised during the debate

in Committee of the Whole for Bill No. 211, Vote 18, the Yukon Housing Corporation.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling five legislative returns answering questions arising from Committee of the Whole debate in both Vote 52, Environment, and Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 211.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I have the following three documents for tabling this afternoon: a 2016 Association of Yukon Communities report entitled *Solid Waste Management: Vision for a Sustainable Model for Yukon Communities*; the 2018 recommendations of the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste; and a letter from the Yukon Conservation Society in support of our waste regionalization plans.

**Speaker:** Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### Petition No. 22 — response

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to Petition No. 22 regarding bedbugs. We understand that the presence of pests in someone's home can cause significant stress and anxiety. The corporation wants to get ahead of any pest infestation, which is why, during lease-signing appointments, tenants are provided with information on how to identify and prevent bedbugs and are encouraged to report any indications of bedbugs to staff immediately. Tenant safety and dignity is of paramount importance. Staff are always willing to discuss concerns and to share information that will improve the health and safety of our tenants.

The corporation owns three heat tents, which are operated by trained staff and contractors to treat furniture and belongings when a bedbug infestation is present and is not treatable by less invasive measures. The current standard is to respond within 24 hours of the initial complaint to limit the potential of bedbug migration throughout buildings; however, the time to arrange for and execute treatment is affected by several factors.

When responding to a complaint, staff of the corporation will work with the tenant to schedule an inspection by a Yukon Housing Corporation certified pest control contractor as soon as possible. Tenants may be asked to confirm the presence of bedbugs; however, I would like to highlight that proof is not required to initiate an inspection. If bedbugs are identified during the initial inspection, the certified contractor will work with the staff to schedule a treatment as soon as possible. If treatment is required, tenants are to complete the pre-treatment checklist prior to the contractor to ensure that treatment is as effective as possible.

In cases where tenants are not able to complete the pre-treatment checklist, the contractor may be engaged to complete the work on their behalf at no cost. If the extent of the bedbug presence in a unit is beyond mitigation via non-invasive treatment and requires tenants to vacate their unit to accommodate a heat treatment, they will be relocated at the

expense of the corporation to a vacant unit. Heat treatments, on average, take about one week to complete. Following all treatment methods, Yukon Housing Corporation's contractor provides two follow-up inspections to verify that remediation was successful.

The corporation covers the cost of all treatments and follow-up inspections, as well as preventive measures, such as mattress covers, bedbug lures, threshold tape, and other supplies, as necessary, upon initial identification of bedbugs. Furniture replacements are handled on a case-by-case basis after all attempts have been made to salvage tenants' belongings. Vacant units with a history of bedbugs are treated prior to reallocation. Specifications of all new multi-unit building construction, renovation projects, and vacancy repairs include sealing all floor and wall joints, as well as additional wall sealing between units and common areas to limit migration of bedbugs.

Recently, the corporation replaced all carpets in the halls and common areas of occupied floors at 600 College Drive and added floor and wall sealing measures to reduce bedbug migration. Since January 1, 2023, the Yukon Housing Corporation has spent \$145,810 on bedbug treatments. The estimated cost for the 2023-24 fiscal year is \$208,500.

I hope this provides clarity on the actions taken by the corporation to mitigate bedbug infestation and that we continue to implement and invest to ensure that our tenants have a safe place to call home.

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House congratulates the Yukon mining industry on a strong 2023 season with estimated mineral exploration expenditures of \$147 million, an 18-percent increase over 2022.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately increase funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to enable them to meet the needs of Yukoners, including preventing wait times for mammography screening for cancer being as long as the 35-month timeline mentioned by a witness from the Yukon Hospital Corporation in the Legislative Assembly on November 21, 2023.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with private contractors to provide new and existing Yukon Housing tenants with access to an enclosed trailer to heat treat possessions and furniture prior to move-in dates in a Yukon Housing building or in cases of bedbug outbreaks.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with youth organizations and other levels of government to plan, develop, and open an indoor skateboard park for youth in Whitehorse.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Housing initiatives fund

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce the launch of the seventh intake of the housing initiatives fund. Meeting the housing needs of Yukoners takes partnership and collaboration. No one government or organization can do it alone. Over the years, the housing initiatives fund has supported community housing partners in building affordable homes across the Yukon. Over the last six intakes, the program supported 57 projects. To date, these projects have added 361 new units in the Yukon, with another 318 affordable units under planning or construction. That is a total of 679 units through all previous intakes of the housing initiatives fund.

This goes beyond numbers; this is concrete progress toward improving the lives of Yukoners by providing safe, accessible, and supportive housing options. Some recent examples of completed projects include 84 units at Normandy Living, 87 units at Boreal Commons, and 52 units at the Cornerstone Community Building.

Today, on the launch of our seventh intake, we invite First Nation governments, First Nation development corporations, developers, contractors, community organizations, and the public to apply for funding to support projects that will increase the range of affordable housing options in their communities.

Since the program's inception in 2018, the Yukon government has committed over \$28 million to this fund. This funding provides incentives for the development of quality affordable housing and includes three funding streams: the shovel-ready project stream in Whitehorse, the shovel-ready project stream in the communities, and the project concept stream. Shovel-ready projects can receive up to \$100,000 per unit and up to \$1 million per project.

These projects must be ready to begin construction within six months of the accepted application and the housing should be ready for occupancy within two years of signing the funding agreement. Under the project concept stream, which is open year-round, applicants can receive up to \$20,000 toward the development of affordable housing project proposals. This funding can be stacked with other funding sources, including federal and Yukon Housing Corporation programs.

Submitted projects must propose at least four units in Whitehorse and one unit in communities, and the rental units must remain affordable for 20 years. Eligible projects include new affordable rentals designed to provide Yukoners with a variety of housing options. Additional consideration will be given to those projects prioritizing the needs of seniors, low-

income tenants, people experiencing homelessness, First Nations, and youth aged 18 to 25.

Projects supporting staff housing solutions across all levels of government and the business sector are also a priority. We are proud of this initiative which continues to make a very real difference in the Yukon's housing landscape. This is another example of our response to addressing housing needs of Yukoners through collaborative partnerships with local housing partners. I encourage both current and aspiring partners to visit yukon.ca, contact the staff at Yukon Housing Corporation for support, and apply for funding today. Together, we can help support Yukoners and ensure that all those in need of affordable housing options have a place to call home.

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the update on the housing initiatives. The supply of housing has not kept up with demand. In fact, it is now worse under the Liberal government. We hope that this money gets out of the door in a timely manner to help address the Yukon's housing crunch.

Salamat po.

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, we are in a housing crisis and we have been saying that for 12 straight years. We have said that so many times, it almost starts to sound meaningless.

I try to think of the human cost of a housing crisis that lasts more than a decade. I think of the stories I heard at the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's tenancy rights discussion, stories of people who have been trying for years to find stable housing and who have been discriminated against and left behind every step of the way.

I think of the stories that I hear of people living in rental housing that doesn't meet the minimum requirements laid out by the act, but they are afraid to call out their landlord because if they are forced to move, they have nowhere to go. I think of going to social events and hearing that the number one thing that people are stressed about is finding housing that they can afford and wondering how long they will be able to stay in the housing they have before they have to start their search all over again.

I think of the people I talk to who are paying astronomical rent who don't qualify for a mortgage even though the mortgage payments would be far lower than the rent they are paying. They are falling further and further behind every month as they try to keep up. I think of the desperate posts on community Facebook groups of families who are running out of options or new employees trying to move to the Yukon with no hope of finding a place.

We see the ripple effects of the housing crisis at all levels of our community. We see our local businesses that, after months of searching, recruit staff to move up here to help them keep their doors open, only for those staff to realize that they could never afford housing here and decide not to come. We see the overcrowded emergency shelter desperately trying to support people who are in crisis — because how can you possibly live a stable, healthy life when you have nowhere to live? We see environmental impacts of substandard and energy-

inefficient housing which is still snatched up because people have no choice.

So, while I am happy to hear that the housing initiative fund will continue, what people are looking for is something new. Right now, we talk about the housing crisis year after year without seeing measurable improvements. We need something new; we need something different; we need bold and brave action to make sure that everyone has a stable, affordable home here in the Yukon.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, housing is a priority for this government and it is a top priority for me as Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation. That's why we continue to invest in affordable, diverse housing options, and that's why we are continuing to work with our housing partners to ensure that our housing programs support and align with the diverse needs of all Yukoners.

What I have heard today in response from the Yukon Party was that it's just worse — not any debate or policy ideas. I can understand the position, maybe. I know that over the years, we have seen funds that have been allocated. We have wanted to have those invested. Our government stands by article 25 of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which recognizes access to adequate housing. We heard that, as well, from the Third Party, from the NDP, today. I know that the Yukon Party's position on this is different. When they were asked about where they stand on this, a quote from their leader was: If you're going to talk about adding housing to the *Human Rights Act*, I don't think that's something I would support.

When it comes to the Third Party, what I saw was a litany of problems. Yes, there are challenges across this entire country, but as I started, there have been hundreds of units — over 50 partnerships through this program, and I think that is new, because it has only been in place since 2018.

Again, on this side of the House, we are driven by the understanding that a place to call home isn't just a physical structure; it is a foundation for hope and opportunity and dignity. We will continue to work with our partners who are here and we will build new projects in partnership, which is the only way forward. There will be new concepts.

We look forward to some of the projects that are coming online now. I look at the projects that have just completed. I don't think there is a Yukoner who cannot stand up and say that we haven't seen new and innovative partnerships — and more to come in 2024.

We are committed to forging a path with partners that ensures that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has access to safe and affordable housing. The housing initiatives fund has helped make significant progress in the availability of affordable homes across the territory. This is good news for Yukoners.

We have also had the strongest growth in the entire country. It is projects like those that we have seen through the housing initiatives fund that help reduce Yukon's housing gaps through pioneering new partnerships and innovative ideas.

Since 2020, the Yukon Housing Corporation has supported over 300 households as well as helped them pay their rent



through the Yukon Housing benefit program. The Yukon Housing Corporation has supported 470 new housing completions since 2020 through its loans and grants programs.

With that, what I will say today to Yukoners is that we understand that the work is far from done and we understand that we have much to do, but I do want to thank our partners, whether they are contractors, First Nation corporations, First Nation governments, or NGOs. Thank you for the work that you do, and we will continue to see progress and I look forward to the builds of 2024.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to the Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Government relationship with municipalities

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Community Services' difficulty in working with communities is becoming well known in municipal circles. The minister often allows these private disputes with mayors to leak out into the public. There is no better example of this than when the minister unilaterally cancelled the Yukon's bid to host the Canada Winter Games. Despite this clearly being a decision of the Liberal Cabinet — and the Liberal Cabinet alone — the minister tried to blame it on the City of Whitehorse, which prompted a letter from the Mayor of Whitehorse criticizing him for the inaccuracy of his comments.

Then, of course, there was the public letter that the minister sent to the city just a few weeks ago that scolded city council for not taking action on drinking water. Shortly before that, he surprised many municipalities when he told the *Yukon News* in October that the lack of emergency preparedness was not his fault but the municipalities'.

Can the minister explain why he has such a hard time working with Yukon communities?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I really want to commend our municipalities for all the work that they have been doing over the last several years. I just recently — two weeks ago — had a very cordial meeting with the Mayor of Haines Junction and I appreciate him and his team taking time out of their busy days to meet with me last Friday. It is not easy to meet on a Friday, but we had a really great conversation about several issues, some of which I will get into this afternoon. Just last week, I met with the Mayor of Whitehorse. I have cordial relations with them.

Honestly, Mr. Speaker, I have to say this afternoon that I absolutely completely reject the assertion by the member opposite that I have a bad relationship with mayors. I work very closely with our municipal partners and I have given all of them my phone number and we work cordially on a number of issues, be it emergency planning, on infrastructure, on housing, on recreation — any issue that comes forward from municipalities to my desk, I handle quickly and with respect.

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's relationship with rural communities has been, in a word, difficult. When the minister tried to ram his better buildings legislation through, the towns of Mayo, Watson Lake, and Teslin all wrote to the

minister and asked to be consulted. He was forced to delay that legislation and actually consult, but he has since blamed that delay as the reason why the program hasn't been successful.

Meanwhile, his handling of rural transfer station closures has infuriated several communities and even prompted at least one petition calling for his resignation.

Then, at their AGM this summer in Watson Lake, the AYC passed a resolution calling for more respectful consultation from the minister. In his speech to the AYC this summer, the Premier promised to bypass the minister and engage directly.

So, can the Premier tell us if his interventions have improved the relationship between the Minister of Community Services and the municipalities?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I am going to challenge the narrative of the member opposite and I would please ask the member opposite to produce the motion that she referred to in her question. I think that she will have a hard time finding it.

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, there are real challenges facing Yukon communities. Under this government, we have seen services cut back, reduced, or even cancelled altogether in rural Yukon. Municipalities are facing huge funding issues and have called for the comprehensive municipal grant to be revised and increased.

In the case of the City of Whitehorse, they have made it clear that the infrastructure challenges facing them are beyond their capacity and they need help from the Yukon government. While the minister has been quick to scold and criticize Whitehorse for their handling of the water treatment plant, he has refused to step up and help.

Put simply, many rural communities have lost faith in this minister. We have seen the Premier step in and take files off the desks of struggling ministers before. Will the Premier live up to his commitment at AYC and agree to step in and help manage the relationships with Yukon communities?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, it's interesting from the MLA for Watson Lake — all the promises made but nothing delivered while in government representing the community of Watson Lake.

What I will say, though, is that when it comes to supporting municipalities, we have seen the comprehensive municipal grant go up 10 percent this year.

I can remember being on city council — the City of Whitehorse — and not seeing anything like that from the previous government.

I will say, though, that what I think Yukoners are thinking about is the leadership that we saw from the Minister of Community Services this summer, first with extensive flooding through the territory and then with fires that challenged us more than we have ever seen before. What I saw was a person who led throughout that whole process. There wasn't a time — at any time of the day — that I couldn't get in touch with that minister to find out what his next move was to support and make sure that Yukoners were safe. Thank you for keeping us all safe this summer. Thank you for doing a phenomenal job this summer as we saw other territories and other provinces not have the same leadership.

**Question re: Energy strategy effect on electricity rates**

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are just starting to feel the impacts of the Liberals' failed energy strategy.

The application to hike power rates that is before the independent Yukon Utilities Board calls for a 14-percent increase to power rates. According to the GRA, one of the major rate-increase drivers is the increasing cost of renting diesel generators. In fact, over 20 percent of the total increase is specifically because of the rentals.

In the Spring Sitting, the minister told the Legislature that Yukon had spent over \$26 million renting diesel generators. We know that this cost is going nowhere but up, and the Energy Corporation confirmed that we will need to rent for at least the next decade — probably more.

When will the Liberals realize that Yukoners just can't afford to pay for their failed energy strategy?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, there is a general rate application in front of our Yukon Utilities Board that Yukon Energy has put there. I know that the Yukon Party characterizes it as a 14-percent increase, but the effect to Yukoners and households is a six-percent increase.

There are costs in there for our diesel capital equipment — for sure. There is also our Whitehorse interconnection project for the Riverside substation upgrades, transmission line replacements from Carmacks to Faro, and the Aishihik five-year licence renewal.

We have the start of the demand-side management program. I encourage all Yukoners to sign up through Yukon Energy to the demand-side management program.

We have the cost of purchasing renewable electricity through our independent power producers. We have all sorts of pieces in there, including diesels — yes, there is a cost for that and, yes, we are looking to update the system throughout. The member opposite is correct that the increase would be six percent to Yukoners' bills.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, just about every single project the Liberals have banked on is either stalled, delayed, or dead in the water. The Yukon Energy Corporation has confirmed that they have no other options than to continue renting diesel generators for at least another decade — probably more. All this time, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has refused to consider constructing a new thermal plant for generation in the Yukon. In fact, on November 8, 2022, he told the Legislature that it would be wrong to build a thermal plant because it will tie us to fossil fuels, but that is exactly what this minister is doing right now. In fact, the plans that are before YESAB right now are for a 15.5-megawatt permanent diesel plant in Dawson City. So, can the minister explain why he thought it was wrong last year but this year, it's just fine?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will stand up every day, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, we do need thermal for backup and we should replace that when we get to end of life, as we are doing right now. We also are growing. What we should be doing is working toward renewables. Sometimes, if we can't get those renewables on fast enough, we should supplement.

Right now, that is rental diesels because they are cheaper. That is what our witnesses told us, although the members opposite don't wish to believe them. I find it completely disrespectful. However, I have also said to the energy utility to keep doing diligence on this and keep coming back and looking at the numbers to see if they change over time, because prices are in fluctuation.

Overall, we should be working toward renewables. That is what we say.

Right now, over 90 percent of the energy that we have in the system is renewable and just one or 1.5 percent — I think that is what Yukon Energy Corporation told me — is supplied by the rental diesels. That is what all of this debate is about: one or 1.5 percent of our total energy supply. What we need to focus on is how we build new renewables, not a permanent diesel plant.

**Mr. Kent:** Well, the fact is that the minister is adding additional permanent diesel capacity in Dawson City. Yukoners are concerned about the cost of living in this territory and the rising power rates that are coming due to the failure of this Liberal government's energy strategy.

We know what the Premier thinks about renting diesels. He said — quote: "We believe it's a good investment." Since then, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has insisted that renting is cheaper than owning, but even the Yukon Energy Corporation is not so sure about that. In fact, they have hired Colliers Consulting to analyze renting versus a permanent plant.

Mr. Speaker, if the Colliers report shows that constructing a permanent plant makes more sense for ratepayers, will the minister abandon his affinity for renting diesels and finally start looking out for ratepayers?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, three key things — some Yukoners remember next generation hydro. Next generation hydro was when the members across the way spent millions and millions of dollars on a new renewable energy plan that never happened. Then they tried to have a partnership with First Nations. Not one First Nation government would partner with them — not one — and then they gave up and said: We're just going to build the diesel plant because we can't get anything else done.

Then we came into government. What we did was to put an independent power policy in place, because we knew that we could get it done and we got it done. Then we leveraged money that did not go to rate — grant money — and we made sure that this money was spread to Old Crow, Beaver Creek, Haines Junction, Burwash — across the Yukon and here — to build renewable projects.

Do you know what's interesting? When we talk about dollars and cents — and I hear the Member for Lake Laberge piping up across the way — you know what? This is a really important fact to know. Out of all of the debt that this government, since it has been responsible, has ever incurred — it has been energy products predominantly led by the Member for Lake Laberge — 75 percent of all of the debt that Yukoners have on their backs is because of his decisions — so, remember that.

When we talk dollars and cents, we know that we're doing the right thing. We're not putting it on the backs of Yukoners and we'll make sure that we have a long-term plan to pay the debt that was put on the backs of Yukoners by the Member for Lake Laberge.

**Question re: Seniors housing**

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, last week, we had yet another Yukon senior come to our office for help. They have been living at the shelter since they were rent-evicted 10 months ago. They have been unable to find a new home that they can afford with their small pension, and they are not the only senior using the shelter.

Some are paying for their belongings to be in storage until they can find a permanent solution where rental prices are out of reach for many and the wait-list for seniors housing is long. This is not how anyone should spend their senior years.

Why has this government abandoned seniors to live long term at the emergency shelter instead of providing adequate, dignified housing?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is very difficult to take one particular case that the member opposite is speaking to. I know that what we have done — in my work with members from both sides of the House when they are representing individuals and making sure that they advocate on their behalf — is to make sure that we work with Yukon Housing to find solutions. Again, it is very difficult in this case.

What I can say is that we are working with many of the folks who were here today — whether from the Anti-Poverty Coalition or from Safe at Home — or working through the by-name list ensuring that we can prioritize for seniors or those folks fleeing violence. Those are the things that we do. We will continue to do that work, but I would be happy, outside of this public domain, to have our officials work with the member opposite to ensure that we understand what this particular situation is and that we look to remedy it.

Overall, we are always making sure that we have options and that we prioritize options for seniors, and that is some of the work that we have done. I look forward to question 2.

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, when seniors have no choice but to live full time at an emergency shelter, we know that successive Yukon Party and Liberal governments have failed them. The Whitehorse Emergency Shelter was never intended to be used this way. Emergency shelters are not housing. They should be the last resort for someone in crisis, not the only option. Senior citizens in our community are being priced out of the rental market and they are scared that they will have to spend their retirement at the shelter or homeless.

When will this government finally address the needs of seniors so they aren't forced to live at the emergency shelter?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services have been working with the seniors supportive housing program to address the gap in the housing continuum for seniors. I know that the Third Party, the NDP, has been very critical of our partnership on Normandy. That is just another example of the private sector coming in and building a

structure. The corporation — we have leveraged 26 affordable housing units at Normandy. That is just one option.

We invited all Members of the Legislative Assembly to look at the new build on the south access that overlooks the Yukon River — that 46-unit building. Again, it is a variety — it is not just for seniors, but it is a mix of housing options.

We have debated thoroughly here about Vimy and I will say that we are behind on that project. We are trying to make sure that we support the organization to come to a point where they have a feasible, fundable plan. These are all things we'll do.

Again, walking into the House today, bringing a case where it's — I know of a situation where there is a person — I want to help. Please, let's make sure that Yukon Housing Corporation has a chance to work — or through the Anti-Poverty Coalition — but one of those avenues that work very well.

**MLA Tredger:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon NDP has been calling for new public housing for over a decade. The former Macaulay Lodge, now an empty lot, has been underused for years. We also know that there are some empty units in some of the seniors housing buildings, yet we still have a long list of unhoused and underhoused seniors. Many more are living in places they can't afford to heat.

Now the government has announced that it is working on a winter housing strategy. This sounds like a great idea and we are pleased to hear that they are looking into this. Unfortunately, it is already well into winter and we have seen temperatures below minus 20. We have seen a lot of strategies from the government with few results. Yukoners can't afford to wait.

What solutions is this government going to implement now to get seniors into appropriate, warm, and dignified housing?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I think that we have strategies in place right now and I want to commend the Minister of Health and Social Services and the work of her team, which has actually made sure that we have a relationship with the Safe at Home Society to ensure that we have housing options into the spring of 2024. I think that 22 or 24 units are in place there.

You talk about strategies. I see bricks and mortar. I see the support that we put into Normandy. I see a very significant build along the riverfront. I think the work that we are doing through our communities to support the private sector to build new units is important work. I think the hundreds of thousands of dollars that we have put in place to support Vimy and de-risk their project is real. It's putting your money where your mouth is. I think that this is solid work.

I think that there is lots of work that needs to continue to be done. But again, it's not just about strategy; it's about real projects and real building. I was happy this summer to see a number of other buildings throughout our communities. I look forward to our multi-unit building in Watson Lake being completed. I look forward to deploying the funds that we have in place for our significant multi-unit buildings in Dawson City as well.

Yes, we are growing at a rapid pace, but we are continuing to build where we need to and fill those gaps.

**Question re: Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and downtown core concerns**

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, last night, the Yukon government hosted a public consultation on the current state of the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and many other issues facing the downtown core. We have heard that businesses and neighbours in that area are feeling desperate and defeated. They want to see real change made, and all they have seen so far has been cosmetic changes and more promises from government.

It seems clear to most people that what is really needed to change is the operating model of the emergency shelter. Will the government agree to consider making real changes to the way in which the emergency shelter is operated to try to limit the negative impacts that face so many people's businesses?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, our government facilitated a downtown community residents meeting in Whitehorse and I certainly want to thank everyone who participated and asked questions and shared their ideas. That took place last night.

The event provided a safe, apolitical space for people to voice their concerns, to share solutions, and to discuss their priorities and the needs of the downtown residents and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this is where we are going to come up with solutions — not from the opposition who just want to redesign a model on their own.

We need to work with our communities. The safety and well-being in the vibrancy of downtown Whitehorse and in all of our communities is something that I think everyone cares deeply about.

Last night was an opportunity for community members to speak freely, to ask questions, and to work collaboratively and bring their voices, ideas, thoughts, and feelings — and the purpose to their solutions. They had an opportunity to discuss and to make things right, to be heard, and to be heard by other community members. It is but one step in the work we are doing to make the downtown community of Whitehorse safe.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Another challenge for downtown businesses and residents that came up at last night's meeting was the rising incidence of property crime, vandalism, and poor behaviour that make it hard for small businesses to operate and for residents and visitors to enjoy the downtown core.

Earlier this session, we passed a motion calling for increased resources for the RCMP to help address the surge in crime. Beyond what is planned already, how much in additional resources will be provided to the RCMP, and how many front-line RCMP members will be added following this commitment?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the opportunity to discuss RCMP funding and resources to them, as I do with them on a regular basis, but certainly it was an opportunity to do that here in the Legislative Assembly.

I am not sure how the members opposite did their budgeting, but as this motion was discussed only a number of

weeks ago, I can indicate that conversations are ongoing, as we work on the budget for next year, including issues of resources to the RCMP. But if the question is if we have sent them money between the time that the motion was passed and today, the answer to that is no. They are working very well with the resources that they have and the increases that they have had over the last number of years from this government, including in last year's budget, which the members opposite speak about on a regular basis with respect to resources to all kinds of important services for Yukoners, including the RCMP — they just never vote for the budget that they need.

**Question re: Yukon University Act consultations**

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, four years ago, this House unanimously passed the *Yukon University Act*. That act is unique to the Yukon and requires that the university must be accountable to the Government of Yukon and each Yukon First Nation. Section 55 of the act spells out that the minister is required to establish the accountability and performance measures in consultation with First Nations.

Can the minister tell us the status of those consultations?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon is very proud of its collaboration with Yukon College to establish Yukon University as Canada's first university north of 60. It's a hybrid university. Yukon University offers degrees, diplomas, certificates, career and trades training, second language support, and upgrading to meet the diverse learning needs of Yukon communities. We are very proud of the work that we've done to make this a reality. It was a long vision in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*.

We have realized that, and the work that we're doing around the accountability framework is really important. We have been working with the university and Yukon First Nations on this framework. The initial draft of the accountability framework from Yukon University has been received, and consultation with Yukon First Nations is currently underway. The plan is to have an approved accountability framework in place by 2024.

Again, I am happy to bring forward more information around this. We look forward to continued collaboration with Yukon University, which helps achieve the commitments outlined in the strategic plan.

**Ms. Clarke:** In the university board minutes from last December, it says that YG will hold public consultations in the winter and spring and then in fall 2023 and that the framework will be approved by the minister.

It is the fall of 2023, and we cannot find any record of consultation on this framework nor any accountability and performance measures for the university. When can Yukoners expect consultation on this, and when will the measures be in place?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I just answered the question. I believe that we are in possession of the draft. A lot of consultation has gone into that draft accountability framework, and we are doing our final consultation and doing our due diligence to make sure that this meets the expectation of our partners. We are now doing a final consultation with

Yukon First Nations, and this is being done through a contractor who has led this work over the last year and a bit, and the plan is to have an approved accountability framework in place in 2024.

I am looking forward to that, and, of course, it is a very important part of our work with Yukon University. We will continue to support that and look forward to having an approved accountability framework that has done all of the due diligence with Yukoners and particularly our partners with Yukon First Nations. Again, I will just restate that this was a long vision of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, and we are meeting that commitment.

**Question re: Psychiatric services**

**Mr. Dixon:** Yesterday, we asked about the closure of a local psychiatry clinic, which comes after a long-time psychiatrist has complained about the lack of responsiveness to the concerns that he has been raising for over a year with this Liberal government. He feels that he has been treated unfairly by this government and, as a result, could be closing his clinic and leaving the territory.

Since then, we have received many calls and letters from concerned patients who want to express their support for the Soulshine clinic and to make it clear that the loss of this psychiatry service will be a huge loss for each and every one of them and the Yukon as a whole. In response to all of this, the Minister of Health and Social Services implied that this doctor was being unethical, and she thinks that the Yukon Medical Council should review his actions. The Yukon desperately needs doctors and in particular psychiatrists.

Does the minister really think that impugning the character of this doctor will help convince him to stay?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I guess I should be surprised; I'm not surprised that the private business — and it is a business — of a psychiatrist here in the territory will be brought to the Legislative Assembly floor. It is certainly not my preference to discuss it here. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to exploring contract opportunities with physicians interested in a contract or a blended model to support service delivery.

We have noted concern about this letter — that the psychiatrist said to his patients asking them to advocate for his financial gain. Meanwhile, the Department of Health and Social Services is reviewing the way that psychiatric services are provided. I spoke to the media yesterday and indicated our important dedication to this to make sure that psychiatric services are provided in a fair way here in the territory.

We continue to request and look at the data from physicians on the service delivery models, and we are moving forward in an equitable way based on the data, and the review of the psychiatric and psychiatrist services is targeted to be completed in January 2024. This particular psychiatrist has been advised of those dates.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, we don't want to be bringing this to the floor of the Legislature either, but this psychiatrist has raised this directly — privately with the minister — for almost a year now and has gotten no response. Yesterday, the

minister dismissed this issue and seemed entirely unaware of it. This was despite many e-mails and letters having been sent to her, her department, and even the Premier now for months. Then, when speaking to the media, her staff handed out the contract history of this doctor to the media, and the minister implied that the doctor was violating his ethical obligations under the YMA's code of conduct and suggested that the Yukon Medical Council, which deals with physician discipline, look into it.

It's becoming quite obvious to everyone that this minister has an axe to grind for some reason. How can a doctor, who is already concerned that he is being treated unfairly, expect to get a fair hearing on this issue from this minister? So, will the Premier agree to step in and help to mediate this issue? Because it's clear that the minister's actions have made an easy resolution much more difficult.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, again, the person opposite — the member opposite — in their role as the Leader of the Official Opposition, should have the facts correct. There have been absolutely many responses to this particular individual. I don't know them, so "axe to grind" is certainly speculation on their part. I have never even met this person that I'm aware of.

Nonetheless, what I can say is that improving the mental wellness of Yukoners is a priority for our government, and we will continue with our ongoing work to transform the territory's health and social services system, including working on the review of how psychiatric services are presented and provided here in the territory, with a blended model of fee-for-service and contract physicians.

Both models play an important role in the delivery of primary and specialist health care, which is what I am concerned with here. We are certainly not opposed to providing doctors with contracts when we are assured that they are good value for the use of tax dollars, while ensuring that patients receive a high level of service. We respect that many physicians are small business owners and that we work with them and all physicians to ensure that they are compensated fairly. We cannot force them to take on more patients. Physicians who are not on contract with the government do continue to be compensated fairly with a fee-for-service.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, what we are concerned about are the many, many Yukoners who have reached out to us who are losing this critical service. We have already seen many letters of support come flooding in for this doctor from colleagues, patients, and other Yukoners. The loss of this clinic could hurt Yukon's already struggling health care system even more, and yet despite this, this minister has chosen to engage in a bizarre open conflict with this doctor.

Yukoners want to continue to have access to already scarce psychiatry services. They don't want to lose these services, yet the conduct of the minister just here today, as well, has put that in jeopardy.

So, will the minister agree to hand this file off to the Premier or even some other minister so that a swift resolution can be found?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** What I will share is this: The team at Health and Social Services and the minister's team have been working directly with the doctor who we have been talking about. We will continue to ensure that we work through this discussion. There have been lots of discussions. The concern from this side of the floor is that this is a negotiation on a monetary decision, and in this particular case, 200 people who are in a vulnerable position and who are seeking guidance are now in the middle of this discussion.

I have spoken with individuals, and the minister has received information, and the opposition has, but this is something that has been ongoing with this particular doctor.

What I will say is this: Tomorrow, the members opposite have a great opportunity to show leadership to Yukoners. We have over \$17 million that is available to support our hospital and our health care system, and I can tell you on this side of the floor that when we do make a mistake and we have to show leadership, we do it. We call it out and say: We can do better. But for political reasons, I will watch tomorrow — Yukoners will watch tomorrow. After all, we have heard for 29 days in this Legislative Assembly — people will be watching the Leader of the Yukon Party and all of the members opposite. Will they support our health care system tomorrow afternoon in the best way they can?

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

**Speaker:** Order, please.

The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 856

**Clerk:** Motion No. 856, standing in the name of Ms. White.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to keep the solid-waste transfer stations open at Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn until solutions that meet the solid-waste disposal needs of each community are found.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think that this surprises anyone that this is a motion that I chose to bring forward today. I have been speaking at length about the transfer stations in these communities and the importance of keeping them open. As a matter of fact, I was thinking about the sheer amount of space I have taken up in Hansard in talking with the minister opposite about the importance of transfer stations.

Although I appreciate that he has tabled the documents he has tabled today, I have referenced them in the past. I will remind the minister opposite that, when we talk about AYC and we talk about who they represent, it's not who he thinks or who he suggests that they do. The reason why I bring this forward is that he keeps on laying into the fact that it was the AYC's

decision, the AYC completed the consultation, and that it has been at the direction of them. I have listed off previously the associate members of AYC, and I will just remind everyone again that they are the Hamlet of Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake, South Klondike, Tagish Local Advisory Council, and the Hamlet of Ibex Valley.

The reason why I bring this forward is that none of those unincorporated or those associate members do represent Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, or Braeburn, and so, that's an important thing.

At this point in time — in the last 12 years, I spent a fair amount travelling around the territory and going to landfills. It's interesting, because before the education I got from the City of Whitehorse, I would have referred to it as a "dump", but they are not. They are not dumps; they are not just something where something gets deposited. They're actively managed, and I think that's really important.

In the number of years that I have been travelling around the territory — the real privilege of travelling around — I often go by to see what the landfill looks like or what the transfer facility looks like. There are a couple other points too.

I will say right now that I don't disagree with some of the actions taken. It is very true that residents of Whitehorse would drive out to the periphery. It is absolutely true. They would go out to Mount Lorne, or they would go to Marsh Lake, or they would go to Lake Laberge. I don't think anyone is disputing that, but when we take the lens of Whitehorse and we put it on a far-reaching community like Johnsons Crossing, or Silver City, or even Braeburn, I think we are not doing those unincorporated places any kind of favours.

Saying that the behaviours of people in an urban setting should affect everyone in rural Yukon — well, I just don't think it's right. We know that people in an urban setting are not people in rural Yukon, and I don't think everybody deserves to be painted with the same lens.

It's important to note at this point that I have attended a fair number of meetings. I have had lots of conversations. I have visited the transfer stations that I mentioned because I have been invited out by community members, and I think that's also an important point. When I am speaking to this, I am actually speaking to the area that exists. I know what it looks like in my head. I have a clear picture of it.

It's also really important that, when we talk about where we are right now with transfer stations, transfer stations are actually a success story. Transfer stations were an environmental decision. Prior to transfer stations, individuals were responsible for their own waste. Whether it was stored properly or incorrectly at their own property, that was part of that story. We do have a long history — if we look at Silver City, as an example, there was an open pit — I going to call that one a "dump" — there was an open-pit dump at one point in time.

Then the decision was made that there should burning to keep that waste under control. That was in an open-pit form. Then the decision was made that it wasn't the safest or the best or the most environmental way, so then it went into burn barrels, and that was really important. That was a better step up

from the open-pit burning and certainly from the open-pit dumping.

Then the real decision — the real success — is when conservation officers got involved and we looked at the transfer stations. I am going to talk specifically about the one in Silver City. It's important to note that the transfer station in Silver City is not marked from the highway. There are no directions. It doesn't tell you where it is, and to be perfectly frank, if I hadn't followed someone to that transfer station, I'm not sure that I would have found it. You can't see it from the highway. You have to go down a ways, but that transfer station — even from the road driving in — you can see that it's well-cared for. It is well-maintained.

That transfer station does have an electric fence, keeping in mind, of course, that this is in the heart of Kluane country. Why is this important? It's important because of the wildlife. It's important that we talk about where this is and where the Johnsons Crossing and where the Braeburn transfer stations are, because they are all in the heart of wildlife.

At Silver City, there is an electric fence; there is a cattle guard, and currently, waste is being put into metal containers, and they do not have wildlife conflicts. The residents are very careful: They close the lids, and if someone has left stuff behind, they clean up, but in conversations with that community — because I was out there at the end of August for the consultation — well, I'm going to say "meeting"; I don't think it was necessarily a consultation; we didn't get into any kind of conversations about solutions, and I think that is part of the problem — there were suggestions at that meeting.

I have brought forward the suggestions or the questions from residents in Johnsons Crossing who have sent me photos from successes that they have seen, for example, in Toad River with suggestions of what could be done. I think the real challenge is that the minister doesn't appear to be listening to what some of those suggestions are. I feel that, when I use the word "consultation", I have a vision in my mind, and it's a conversation, and it's a back-and-forth — it's charting a path forward. It's not superseding; it's not me telling you what we're going to do; it's us having a discussion about what we're going to do and how we're going to get there. That was my expectation.

The issue with rural transfer stations is so big and is of such importance to people in rural Yukon that I actually included it in the 2023 confidence and supply agreement. I wanted those conversations to continue, and I wanted government to work with those unincorporated — those rural — communities to find a solution, because I believe there are solutions.

So, I have sat again — I have sat in Zoom calls; I have sat in the research centre; I have sat with people, and I have had them make suggestions. I have heard from the minister — I have actually heard from a couple of ministers. I will just say this: I don't believe saying that rural Yukon should have access to services is not an environmental stance. I look forward to someone correcting me and telling me why I'm wrong — because I disagree with that statement.

I believe that rural Yukon should have access to services. More than that, rural Yukon has made suggestions. So, when

the minister says that rural Yukon does not want to pay and they shouldn't get a free ride, well, I'm just going to let everyone know that rural Yukon has said that they will pay. They have actually said: We're happy to pay, but it doesn't make sense to have someone that we have to pay every time we drop off. It can be added to our property taxes. Just put it on there, and we'll pay it all at once, and we will pay. We will pay our fair share. Tell us what that is, and we will pay. But the minister has said that they want to do it for free. The minister has said that they are irresponsible. He has said that they lay waste; they bring things that are inappropriate to the transfer station.

I will say that it's not the people in those communities. The people in those communities have said: Put a gate on it and put a lock on the gate. We will volunteer, and we will keep it open. Give community members keys, and we will take care of it. We will put things in. But the minister continues to say that rural Yukon refuses to participate and that they don't want to find solutions. I disagree. I do disagree.

Partially, today I'm making sure that this motion comes up, and I am going to be really honest with everyone in the room — having the first spot for debate day is a big deal in the opposition, because there's a chance we're going to get to a vote. Of all the really important things that we have brought forward as the NDP, not just in this last 27 days — just to correct the Premier — but in this time, there are many other things that I think are incredibly important, but this is the one that I decided we had to talk about today. Right now, in rural Yukon, there is a real fear that, with not enough notice, they are going to be told that their transfer stations are going to be closed. That is why this is here, because I really believe that there is an opportunity to find a solution.

We were told that the reason why we are closing these down is the recommendation of the AYC, and then we're going to talk about the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste or the solid-waste action plan. That's fine; the minister can recite all those documents, and it's all important, and that's fine, but again, these sites, as they are — and I don't disagree that they are contaminated, but they've been contaminated for a very long time, and it was not the fault of the people who live in those communities right now. The contamination that started in Silver City was far before the current residents of Silver City, so to say that the current people in those situations are going to be punished for the mistakes of the past I don't think is fair.

I think that there is an opportunity, if we are concerned about contamination and that those sites need to be remediated — well, that's fine; then remediate them. Then build another one and line it, put the right surface on it, put in the electric fence, put in a cattle guard, and put in a gate that locks. No one in rural Yukon has said that they won't separate their waste. As a matter of fact, today at 4:00 p.m. — and I really do appreciate it. I've said again that the public servants who have been tasked with these consultation meetings are doing the absolute best they can — there was a meeting planned today in Silver City. There is some illness in Haines Junction and in the surrounding areas, so this meeting has gone virtual. It was at the urging of people who initially were not going to attend but changed their

minds and are going to go. I am grateful for that, because they are keen to try to find a solution.

Again, I believe that there is a solution, but the solution can't just be: We're closing it down and that is it. Because that doesn't work for rural Yukon; it doesn't work for rural Yukon.

I am also going to point out here that in the communication that was circulating for the public servants who were hosting the meeting today in Silver City — again, I appreciate — or at the meeting in August where there was a decision to have a second meeting where they would come forward with different solutions and different experts — there is going to be recycling today and there is going to be compost today in that conversation. It is all really important, but initially, that community said: We don't want to go back. They said: We went to the first one. We thought it was going to be a consultation; it wasn't a consultation. We were just being told what was going to happen, and that doesn't feel like a conversation. That feels like we were just being told what is going to happen.

I actually responded to them, and I said: Please, please go back. Please go back and bring your good ideas and bring your suggestions, because if you don't, then where can I go? Where can I lean into — if you are not making suggestions, how can I say that the communities are still trying to work with Yukon government?

The reason why I say this is because I am included in a very long e-mail thread at this point in time with many, many folks whom I have a lot of respect for in the Silver City area, because, again, I went there and I heard from them, and I heard what was going on. I have also had lots of blowback. I mean, the Member for Kluane wrote a colourful letter to the editor last week, which is — he is entitled to his opinion. I disagree with him — never wavered on this issue, but he has opinions.

So, when I sent the e-mail to those folks in Silver City, I pleaded. I said: Please go. Forget about the minister. Know that the public servants who are coming are going to do their best and that the experts who they are bringing — they just don't want to be pawns of government; they want to work together. They want to help you find solutions.

I am just going to read an e-mail, and I have sent it to Hansard, so I thank them for that in advance. I am going to read this e-mail. This is the response that I got from someone, and I think that it is important, because it helps colour the conversation. It says: "... we had a change of heart and we are willing to attend the November 22nd workshop. However, we are suggesting to also have the meeting via zoom as at the end of November the weather and the highway can be unpredictable. This way more people can attend. We want to emphasize our concerns that our participation at this workshop will be misconstrued as community buy-in. It is not! We want the Silver City transfer station kept operational and improved like a locking gate, recycling, organics and so on. We are willing to listen to the experts and we want input towards workable solutions within the present transfer station site. The following quote is from Toshie Cartier. She makes a very good point."

I am quoting from another e-mail, and it says: "We will attend if the workshop is meant to keep and improve our transfer station, but we don't this workshop to be used as justification to close the transfer station. We do not want to have an experience like the presentation we had at the end of August which was mistakenly called a consultation."

The reason I wanted to read this in is that it shows that there is a willingness from that community to work together still. Despite the mistrust that they have in the process, they are still willing to go and I think that's important.

I have spoken at length about this issue. I have read in some very unflattering thoughts about the minister that have been sent in to me and to the public media. I could read it all in again, but I don't think that it is actually helpful.

Really, ultimately, I know where the rural members in this Chamber stand because, as people who represent rural Yukon — I should say that I know where most rural members stand — they understand that the reality is a bit different. The truth of the matter is that we have a Whitehorse MLA who is in charge of the file. We have one rural member from the government side who, I am sure, will have some thoughts to share with us about why I am wrong and why it is not the environmental way.

But ultimately, what I am asking for today is that these transfer stations be kept open.

Pardon me; I am just going to make sure that I get it right — that the solid-waste transfer stations are kept open at Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn until solutions that meet the solid-waste disposal needs of each community are found.

I do not want anyone to be surprised by a government decision that is imposed on them. I believe that people in rural Yukon have really good ideas about a path forward and I believe that we should work toward that. It is really important that, in this Chamber — there are 19 of us who were elected and we have always recognized in the Yukon the importance of the urban-rural conversation, so much so that MLAs in urban Whitehorse typically have far more folks whom we represent than rural Yukon, but we all make the decision that we do not want rural Yukon to be superseded or to have things imposed on them by the City of Whitehorse. This is one of those conversations. The bad behaviour of folks who live in Whitehorse should not affect all rural Yukon. It should not.

Again, people are willing to pay. They have said that. They are willing to find a way forward, and so now I look forward to hearing from others about their position on this. More than that, I am hopeful that, with three hours, we will be able to get to a vote.

I am going to sit down and I will pass it over to the minister. I look forward to him agreeing with me. That would be wild; that would be a great Christmas gift. I look forward to the conversation and, more than that, I look forward to finding solutions.

I wish those folks in Silver City who are just about to go on their Zoom call at 4:00 p.m. to try to talk about solutions as they learn from experts — I wish them well in their work. I thank them for going back to something when they have felt that going back doesn't make sense, but they are going back. I



appreciate that. I wish the people hosting that meeting would as well.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, just before the minister gets a chance to respond, I just wanted to put my two cents in as well. It certainly is a pleasure today to rise to speak to Motion No. 856, which was brought forward by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I would like to thank the Leader of the NDP for bringing this motion forward. It's very similar to Motion No. 793, I believe, that I brought to the floor of this Assembly about a month ago. I think it was on October 25.

Unfortunately, that motion didn't get to a vote as I had hoped it would, but I think it is important. I have to thank the Leader of the NDP for her comments today, because I think that it really does reflect well on the thoughts of rural Yukoners — certainly the ones to whom I have spoken and the ones at Johnsons Crossing in particular. These are people whom I have known for many years. I deal with them very regularly and I appreciate where they are coming from. I brought the motion forward back in October on their behalf to try to encourage the government to understand, I guess, and to see their point of view. They are taxpayers of this territory. They deserve to be respected and listened to — just the same as anyone else. I think it's important that we take time out of our lives in the Legislature to discuss this issue.

Again, as the Leader of the NDP said, the minister and possibly the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes will talk about, in particular, how the Yukon Party doesn't believe in any of this, but that's not true. I agree that regionalization is important. I agree that solid waste is very expensive. I agree that it's important. I agree that we need to deal with it.

But in my remarks on October 25, I talked extensively about the importance of consultation. That's the crux of the problem here. When you go and tell someone how it is and then say that it is consultation, that's wrong. People don't accept that and they don't respect that. I think that it's very important — for this minister in particular — to understand that.

I look forward to others' comments today. At the end of the day, I would love to see this motion get to a vote and I would love to see the government see the error in their ways. We heard the Premier in Question Period today talk about how this government can make mistakes and stand up and say that they take responsibility. Well, here is a perfect opportunity for this government and this minister to stand up and say: We made a mistake; we were trying to do the right thing; we didn't go about it in the right way and we're willing to listen and fix it.

I would be very happy to hear that or see that today.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy this afternoon to be addressing this issue again. My good colleague the Leader of the Third Party, in her remarks — there is an awful lot to respond to there. I'm happy to do that this afternoon, because what I heard this afternoon is my colleague trying to separate the environment from rural Yukon. I think

that's frankly disingenuous. You can't separate the environment from this issue.

The environment is central to this issue, just like it was when the former government got rid of burning in rural Yukon. At that time, it was a very contentious discussion. Lots of people were complaining about trash being burned in landfills. Many groups stepped up and ended that practice, and the government actually did act on that and got rid of it. Great — that was an advancement in the way we handle our garbage in the territory. But it was about the environment then and it's about the environment now. The environment can't be ignored here; it's front and centre in this discussion.

Right out of the gate, the second thing that I would just like to, right off the hop, get on the record is that today they are having a remote meeting because the venue was cancelled for whatever reason — illness, sure. The venue cancelled this morning, so they have gone to a virtual meeting to provide all of the expertise for Silver City to work on ways to deal with the garbage that those citizens produce. That is happening today. I look forward to hearing what comes out of that meeting and we'll see where it goes from there.

The meeting is being done because this government takes its commitments to the confidence and supply agreement very seriously, and we're working through the very process that was outlined in our confidence and supply agreement with the Yukon New Democrats. We take it seriously, we are working through and we are honouring that agreement, and we are going to continue to honour that agreement. We said that we would talk to the people in rural Yukon about rural transfer stations and we are.

As a matter of fact, I want to note this afternoon that we actually have found a solution in Keno, working with the community — businesses and citizens. That is tremendous.

Now we are working on one for Silver City. We have held meetings in Braeburn and in Johnsons Crossing, and my good colleague will be able to talk about the work that he has done in more detail and I will talk about it a little bit more this afternoon as well.

The work is ongoing. We are looking for solutions and we are looking for solutions whereby we advance a system of regional landfills across the territory. The goal is to help the environment. There is a lot of good that will come out of this refinement, improvement, and investment in rural Yukon. Central to that is improving and protecting the environment that Yukoners revere and depend on. It will also help us to deal with the garbage that we produce, and that has all sorts of really, really great implications for the territory.

What we can't have anymore are landfills that are not controlled, like the one at Silver City, like the one at Braeburn, like the one at Johnsons Crossing, like the one at Pelly, and like the one at Keno, which is now closed because we found a solution for that. We are looking for solutions in these other areas. We cannot, in a regional landfill model, have areas where people can get rid of their garbage without any oversight. That has a whole host of problems and that is what we're trying to say.

The environment is central to this, which is one of the reasons why, on November 10, the Yukon Conservation Society wrote to me in support of the regional landfill initiative. I will talk about the letter this afternoon, but one of the key takeaways from that letter is that the Yukon Conservation Society is concerned about unregulated garbage disposal in community landfills across the Yukon. Again, the Yukon Conservation Society — which has been in the service of Yukoners since 1968 — is saying that they want to ensure that the Yukon's natural resources are managed wisely and that development is informed by environmental consideration. One of the key things in this letter is that the Yukon Conservation Society is concerned about unregulated garbage disposal in community landfills across the Yukon. That would be in Keno, Johnsons Crossing, in Braeburn, and in Silver City.

What we're seeing there are really, really terrible outcomes. In Braeburn, at the beginning of October, we saw a bunch of car parts — oil-soaked transmissions, engines, fuel canisters, and all sorts of detritus from society — dumped in the uncontrolled Braeburn site, polluting it. It cost the Government of Yukon a lot to clean that up. We saw oil spilled in one of our uncontrolled landfills. Again, it cost tens of thousands of dollars to clean up. Just last week, we saw a fire start at the Pelly landfill, which is uncontrolled, but it will become one of our regional stations. We are investing in that landfill to make sure that it will be staffed and have regular hours, gates, and tipping fees to make it fair to everyone. That's coming, but just last week in that currently uncontrolled landfill, we saw a fire started. Fire in a landfill is exceedingly expensive. It could be dangerous, and it is something that we have to wrangle.

This is the state of affairs right now. The territory is working to improve the way it manages the amount of garbage that society is producing. We are doing that through a regional landfill model. We are doing that for the environment, for municipalities who have asked us for this, because they want to be able to see that people from outside their municipal borders who are contributing to the garbage that they are paying to dispose of in the municipality are actually contributing to the solution by paying for it. That doesn't happen right now.

The solutions we are seeking in Silver City today — and the civil service is tremendous. The group at Community Services is doing an absolutely incredible job dealing with citizens in Silver City, Braeburn, and Johnsons Crossing — currently, those are the last three areas that we are dealing with that have these transfer stations that are uncontrolled. The civil service is looking for solutions. In all three of those communities, they have held consultations on this, and they are doing so at the behest of this government and at the behest of me. I am seeking these solutions. I want them.

It's not like there's this disconnect between the civil service that's working really, really hard to find solutions and I am trying to block them. It has nothing to do with that. I want to see good solutions that help to ease the transition for people living in these small communities. In sum total, we are talking about probably fewer than 75 people. We are working very, very hard to find a solution that will help them transition to the

regional landfill model, where they will then dispose of garbage equally with everybody else.

Again, the member opposite is right. We have spent an awful lot of time on this issue in this House, and I think that's tremendous. We are talking about garbage, though. We are talking about waste oil, hazardous waste, metals, old cars, plastics, building materials, industrial materials, brush, fallen trees, recycling, and compost. We are talking about changing the way we manage these things, central to the environmental discussion we are having today.

It's not about rural services, because we're actually investing in rural services. We are putting more people into rural Yukon and more jobs through the management of their landfill. We are investing in capital expenses to make their landfills better for everyone. We are putting tipping fees in place so that there is no more dump shopping, where people travel hundreds of kilometres to throw their garbage into an unmanaged landfill because they can. They have waste oil because they just changed all the oil in their trucks. This thing is sitting around in their driveway, and they want to get rid of it. They drive to an uncontrolled landfill to get rid of it, throw it in there, and a truck comes along, picks it up, and throws it right into the midst of the rest of the garbage at the landfill. We have to end that. We have to put controls in place.

Communities like Keno, with 25 people, were not large enough to sustain a regional landfill. It wasn't big enough. Silver City has fewer than five residential homes. It is smaller than Keno. It cannot sustain a regional landfill with a gate and a supervisor collecting tipping fees. It is not viable. So, we have two landfills that service that region, one at Destruction Bay and one in Haines Junction. That is the plan.

With Haines Junction, I just spoke with the mayor two weeks ago. We had a great conversation about this. When we got on to landfills, one of the first things that came out of the community of Haines Junction was that they are upset because people are dump shopping. They don't have controls on their dump, so people are driving from Whitehorse to Haines Junction and tossing their garbage into the landfill unsupervised, and they have to pay for that as a municipality, and they want to know how we can fix this. I said: Well, we're looking at regional landfills. That's a great way to start. How can we get you there? So, they are working on that now.

This is a big issue, but it is about the environment. It's about dump shopping and basically sociology, in that there are a few bad apples who will drive a long way to get rid of trucks. Trucks at Haines Junction again, so waste metal. There are lots of cars being dumped at the Haines Junction landfill. They are just showing up there, and now the municipality has to pay to truck them back to Whitehorse and pay the tipping fees to get rid of them. They don't find that this is fair.

The member opposite is shouting something; I don't know what it is, but the reality is that people in Haines Junction — the mayor and the CAO — told me just two weeks ago that they have a problem with waste metals — cars and that type of thing — showing up at their landfill and that they have to bring it back to Whitehorse. They want to know how that happens and if we can help fund that.

I understand that change is hard. We're working with Yukoners to manage that change. We're doing that as we speak to try to find ways to work with this to make landfills better. Several dozen Yukoners most affected by this change are looking for ways to transition to the new landfill model. That's what this talk this afternoon is all about — talking about how to make that happen. That's fair; that's good.

But before I get into the nuts and bolts of the plan, I want to say explicitly that I'm very surprised by some in this House who have called the plan dumb. This is disrespectful to the many thoughtful Yukoners who have come up with a plan, which was spurred by municipalities who saw first-hand the very real problems that are caused by unsupervised transfer stations on the side of the road. Those problems are exacerbated when gated, supervised landfills are the norm, because people will then start moving their garbage to the unsupervised sites and getting rid of it for free, out of sight.

The plan is to have Yukoners bring their garbage to gated, supervised, and well-managed landfills, and they will be paying a relatively small fee for that privilege, which is not dumb, as some in this House have characterized it publicly. It is responsible, it is fair, it is coordinated and consistent, it is flexible, and it is based on community involvement. It is also sustainable, it is environmentally wise, and it is important financially to municipalities. It's also an adjustment to a few dozen people fortunate enough to have had free and unsupervised transfer stations near their homes for many years.

Such an adjustment can be painful. That's why the incredible staff at Community Services is working with residents on tools to make that transition easier. We've done it in Keno. We're now looking at how to ease the transition to the regional landfill model for these other small communities: Silver City, Braeburn, and Johnsons Crossing.

The member for the riding of Nisutlin has told us that the population of Johnsons Crossing is about 56 people, and that is borne out by some of the stats by the Bureau of Statistics. For Braeburn and for Silver City, the stats are so small that they don't have actual numbers for those communities.

Now, in the confidence and supply agreement, our government committed to consult with communities to determine household waste options in Keno, Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn, and I'm very glad the team at Community Services worked with Keno residents and businesses to come up with a solution for that community that allowed the uncontrolled transfer station to close, and that is why it is no longer part of the discussion. Keno's 25 or so residents represent one of the largest of the four unincorporated communities affected by the new regional landfill plan, so that was a great start. There is more work to be done, though. That's what we are talking about, in part, this afternoon. We are doing that work. As I said, the meetings are happening today.

Now, I have been speaking to people in communities, and there is still a lack of understanding about the amount of consultation that we politicians and departmental staff have done on this file. It is significant. We have held multiple consultations and public meetings in each of the communities since 2019, when we began this journey. It is not something

that was just forced on communities out of the blue. We have been working on this report — the initial report came out in January 2016; it is now 2023, so we are looking at seven years. The Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste started this journey in 2018, and we have had 28 public consultations on solid-waste disposal since then. Let me repeat that: 28 meetings in the communities on solid waste. That includes six meetings with Keno residents, four meetings with Johnsons Crossing residents, three meetings with Braeburn residents, and three meetings with the Silver City residents this year alone. An additional workshop is scheduled for today with residents. We will see where that goes and what comes of that.

We have been working very hard to accommodate citizen participation, and we are listening to residents and trying to suss out viable options for the problems that they face. I'm not opposed to that; I'm looking for solutions. I hope that today we find some concrete ways forward. We are working to make it easy for people to participate in these meetings. Today is a virtual meeting. It is important, because we want to hear from people, and if they don't elect to show up to these meetings, then their ideas to solve the problem before us will not be part of the discussion. We are working with residents and committed to consulting with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn. The transfer stations in these three unincorporated places are not closing in the near term, but once we get the regional landfills established, residents will have to use the controlled, supervised landfills.

We have talked a lot about the great work of the civil service. I have to commend that and keep that going —

**Deputy Speaker (Ms. Blake):** The member has 30 seconds.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thirty seconds? So, I will wrap up my comments by saying that the Association of Yukon Communities has done great work on this in 2016. The one thing their initial plan was not was dumb.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Motion No. 856 regarding the solid-waste transfer stations at Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, Silver City, and Keno. I would first like to begin by thanking all the people over the many years, which I will speak to in a little bit, who have helped to improve the way in which solid waste has been disposed of in the territory.

Just listening to some of the comments from the minister earlier — before I get into it, I wrote a couple of things down here. The minister talked about 25 residents at Silver City. At any given time in the summer, if you go to the Kluane Lake Research Station, you will probably see 25 or more people there just at that location. You go to Yukon Lake Cabins, which you can see from there, which is just up the lake, and at any given time in the summer, you could probably see that many people there, too. If you go to Shakat Tun Wilderness Camp, Chief James Allen's camp on Christmas Bay, at any given time in the summer and the winter, he is actively busy with lots of people.

Icefield Discovery across the street on any given day in the summertime will have people there.

The previous minister — this goes back a long way, and one of the first letters — when we heard that they were going to close Silver City — that was ever written to this Liberal government was written to the previous minister by the Kluane Lake Research Station. The minister, earlier today in the House, said that we need to help the environment and improve and protect the environment and that's why we're closing it. I don't know if the previous minister will get up and speak today. Maybe he has a copy of that letter and he can read it, because the letter from the Arctic Institute — and the fellow who wrote it — highlighted the reasons why it needs to stay open for the residents, which is because of the environment.

We know that solid waste poses many issues throughout the territory. We know that it's especially challenging in rural Yukon. We also know that consultation with rural Yukon is the first step to finding solutions, and this has not happened.

My colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin mentioned before that the CASA states that the government will consult with these four affected communities. I do thank the NDP for this, but unfortunately, this has not been the case and there has still not been adequate consultation.

I would like to remind the minister that releasing a statement to these communities telling them that their rural transfer stations are closing with no input from the community members is not consultation. The government plan might work for some of those communities, but I know that they haven't been adequately consulted in my riding.

During Community Services debate, the Leader of the NDP also reminded the minister that being told the outcome is not consultation. That is so true.

With that being said, it is no surprise that many rural Yukoners are unhappy. My constituents in Burwash, Destruction Bay, and Silver City, as well as Keno residents, have sent letters to both the Minister of Community Services and the Premier expressing serious concerns regarding this decision and requesting proper consultation before the Liberals force this through.

This minister continues to demonstrate a lack of understanding and respect for rural Yukon. A resident shared that they have been asking for this proper consultation for over three years regarding these transfer stations. Surely, the minister could have found some time to listen in those three years. Instead, there were a couple of community meetings labeled as "consultation" — and I think the minister thinks that the one happening today is — with government officials telling rural Yukoners that their transfer stations are closing because the minister says they are closing. The officials are doing the best they can in working with the constituents, and I thank them for that. Especially in my riding of Kluane, not only am I hearing from individual community members but also from the Kluane First Nation, the Village of Haines Junction, the Arctic Institute of North America, and the majority of business owners whom I spoke about earlier who have reached out to express their concerns and objections to the closures.

Even with all these concerns, the minister isn't willing to listen to these rural Yukoners and reconsider his decision. Instead, he just blames others for the closure. The frustration in these communities grows as the minister continues to ignore their voices.

These issues are getting to the point where the Premier should maybe consider stepping in, just as he has with other ministers, to make sure that communities are consulted and decisions are made in a meaningful way with input from residents who will be affected.

I am advocating for rural Yukoners and residents in my riding, as I have on many issues in the past. Here are just a few concerns I have heard on this issue. There are concerns that, by closing the landfill, residents will have to store their garbage on their property until they are able to make a trip to another community. This will increase human-bear conflict and pose other issues, as well, for homeowners and business owners.

Then there is the emissions debate. Considering that this government is trying to find ways to reduce emissions, closing transfer stations will result in every resident, business, and organization having to travel individually to the landfills, burning more fuel.

I have advocated for the work with rural Yukoners on many issues. There is certainly a wish for residents to be putting their energy into things that will actually help to expand services in their communities rather than fighting these service cuts that we are talking about today. I know that, in my riding, they would rather be working with the government instead of begging for services. Their priorities for government are things like better cell coverage in that area, connecting to fibre, reliable green energy sources, firesmarting, and brushing. They are worried about forest fires. They are worried about road maintenance — and working with the Tourism department for more tourism opportunities. They want to work with all of these government departments to find solutions to things like health care closures, overworked EMS workers, and improvements to highways, like I said earlier. This is just to list a few. Instead, they are begging for discussions to take place regarding these transfer stations. They just want to be heard.

The confidence and supply agreement — CASA — requires the minister to consult with rural Yukoners regarding the solid-waste transfer stations. This motion today shows that the NDP also realizes — and I believe that they do — that rural Yukoners deserve consultation. My colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin also spoke in-depth to a similar motion, but the bottom line is that these residents need consultation. My colleague from Lake Laberge echoes the same thing. He wants to ensure that his constituents in Braeburn are being heard.

The minister needs to speak to the affected community members — those ones that he called, I believe, on the fringe of society — those ones, yes — to get their input and come up with better solutions together instead of cutting even more services to rural Yukon. We need to remember in this Assembly that, in rural Yukon, it is vast and diverse, and just because it works in one place, it may not work in every place.

In closing, I would like to thank all those mentioned earlier for their work. The ones who have been writing letters — and

who sometimes haven't been responded to yet from the government — and those ones who are doing research and who are trying to explain why these landfills need to stay open.

Like the Leader of the Third Party said, if the minister had gone to one of those meetings and listened, he would have heard so many solutions that he wouldn't know which one to pick. They know what they're doing out there. They live in rural Yukon; they don't live in Whitehorse West or wherever the minister comes from.

Again, thank you to all of them and I sure hope that we can find a solution. I sure hope that every member in this House today supports this motion.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the motion, the same as I appreciated the motion from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin when he brought forward the last one.

One of the reasons that I'm glad that we're talking about this is because I absolutely hate waste. The folks around me — I know that whenever I'm around them, they know that I struggle to not print paper — which is such a hard thing to do in this job — and to just generally try to reduce waste. It does not even just have to do with physical waste. I hate waste of time; I hate waste of energy; I hate waste of all of the resources that we have.

I think that this is an incredibly important thing — what we are talking about. Between two weeks ago when we were debating a similar motion and today, I happened to bump into one of the past executive directors of the Association of Yukon Communities. Back when we started with this, the AYC urged us to move ahead on this issue. I made a commitment to the AYC, including to that executive director, that I would hustle on this when I had the role as Minister of Community Services. The commitment was to try to improve our solid-waste system across the territory and it was based on these recommendations from the Association of Yukon Communities. That is 2016; that is before we were elected in government. In fact, I remember being on city council and going through a lot of those meetings talking about solid waste and our concern across the territory about the overall system and our frustration that the Yukon government wasn't moving on it — that it was stalled.

I remember raising this issue through the Association of Yukon Communities to the then-minister — a couple of the people across the way were ministers of Community Services at one point or another — of the Yukon Party.

By the way, when the Member for Takhini-Kopper King raised this, she referenced who the AYC represents, but it wasn't quite an exhaustive list, so I'll just add to it. Yes, it does include Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake, Tagish, Carcross, and Ibex Valley. But it also includes Carmacks, Dawson, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. While the member was speaking, I looked up the latest demographics of Yukon to try to see what percentage of the population is represented by the AYC. The answer is 93 percent or more. It's a little bit difficult because of some of the unincorporated areas. They represent nine out of 10 Yukoners. No, it is not all, but it is most. I will also note, as the member did, that it does not include Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, Braeburn, or Keno.

What was that plan by the Association of Yukon Communities? It was to do several things. The first one was to introduce polluter pay — in other words, to get all Yukoners to pay not everything for their waste but something for their waste so that we could send a signal that waste has a cost and that we should do our best to try to reduce, reuse, recycle — in that order. So, it was to put a price signal out there. It's a very common practice and it's one of the underlying principles. The Association of Yukon Communities came to us and said that we need a system in the territory that deals with polluter pay. We agreed.

By the way, I would be happy if, at any time that we do engagement with Yukoners, we get 93 percent. That would be amazing.

This was coming as a recommendation from them.

The second thing was that, under polluter pay, we try to make it as level as possible to stop this thing happening of dump shopping — and I agree with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King when she referenced “dump” as a pejorative term for our transfer stations and our solid-waste facilities, but Yukoners know what we're talking about and what goes on — because I have lived in Marsh Lake for 25 years and I have volunteered on our solid-waste society several times. I know when there are Yukoners who drive out to use the Marsh Lake solid-waste transfer station.

The idea is to try to make the cost roughly level across regions so that we don't get that differential so that people will load up the back of their pickup truck or their car and take garbage to another place. As part of those two things — to have polluter pay and to have leveled cost — we realized that what we needed to do across the Yukon was to gate and staff the solid-waste facilities — all of them.

Those are the overarching pieces of regionalization. That was brought to us as a government from the Association of Yukon Communities. We agreed with it and we said that we would plan around it and that we would talk to Yukoners. That led to a committee being formed that included some municipality folk, some Department of Environment folk, and some Department of Community Services folk from the Operations branch, and they worked through this plan and they brought it to us. Again, that's the plan that was tabled today, and so far, so good. In fact, I don't think that it has the concerns raised yet. But that's 2018, so to try to suggest that we haven't been out there talking with Yukoners is a bit far-fetched for me. In fact, I have done a bunch of that engagement with Yukoners as I have been in this role, and I'm going to talk about one set of that engagement in particular.

It's true that once that plan got to that stage where they worked it all through and they said: Here's what we're going to do: We're going to work with our municipalities, make sure to support them — and we had to do long-term liability work with them because the Yukon government shares some of that liability, so we had to negotiate that with them.

Another one of the early steps was that we would start to charge in those solid-waste facilities closest to Whitehorse. That includes Deep Creek, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Tagish, and Carcross. I tell you, even though the amount we were

charging for those landfills — which was trying to be comparable to Whitehorse — turned out to be more or less a buck a bag of garbage, that charge is maybe a quarter or one-fifth of the total cost to deal with that waste. But it was, again, to put a price signal out there. I recall doing that. I would have to look it up — in 2018, we had the plan put in place, and that first step had to do with those solid-waste landfill facilities, and that got put in place. It's in my own backyard. I recall after that — so, that had to be in 2020 or earlier. Then we were in dialogue with smaller communities. Yes, I had letters from Silver City.

By the way, here's one of the things that no one seems to be talking about. Those solid-waste facilities are meant for residential folks. They're not supposed to be for businesses. They are not supposed to be for academic institutions. Those places are supposed to deal with their solid waste themselves. That is what these landfills are designed for. They are designed for residential, and we know that there are lots of businesses and other groups that use the landfills, but that's not the service that is meant to be provided.

When I wrote back to the Arctic Institute, I talked to them about their concerns. I did have a letter from Silver City, yes. I don't recall any conversations from Braeburn. I do recall many conversations with Keno. I travelled to Keno several times. The Premier travelled to Keno, too.

By the way, just in terms of engagement with communities, when I was in the role of the Minister of Community Services, I made a point of making it to try to tour Yukon communities. I won't say that I got to every Yukon community, but my goal was to try to get to Yukon communities twice a year. I certainly made it to every municipality twice a year, and I had quarterly meetings with the City of Whitehorse.

When I was a councillor with the City of Whitehorse and I experienced the Yukon Party in the role with Community Services, I never saw that. I saw the minister once a year at an AYC meeting. So, I knew how frustrating that was under the Yukon Party — that level of engagement — so I made sure to try to up that. I have checked with the Minister of Community Services, and I believe that they have kept up that practice of regular, in-person meetings in our communities. Now, COVID will have mucked up a bunch of it, for sure, but the point is that we are working to get into our communities.

The one that I want to talk about is Johnsons Crossing. The folks from Johnsons Crossing reached out to me — I think it was in late 2019 or early 2020 — and they talked to me about trying to find other solutions. I said: Yes, let's get together. I recall going for a first meeting held at the restaurant, and we talked things over, and we agreed to do follow-up. There was some correspondence back and forth during that time. We went and spent — I don't know — a couple of hours or a few hours sitting at a resident's home. I made sure to reach out to the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, but he already knew, and it was great that he was coming, and I appreciate that he attended. We had a pretty involved conversation about ideas and solutions and what could happen, so I'm going to talk about a few of those things.

Before I do that, I just want to acknowledge — and I will go back and read the Hansard — but I want to appreciate the

comments that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin made about agreeing with the principles of regionalization or something like that, about some of the things trying to be achieved with this report. I heard — one of the qualifiers that was being discussed by the Minister of Community Services — what I'm going to say is that this is a smart report. It is a really good approach, but we have this challenge that there are several small communities that have had landfills but are probably not able to have them gated and staffed due to their size. So, what could we do? One of the suggestions was: If there is a business that already has that responsibility of dealing with their solid waste, could they piggyback off a system like that? That was discussed.

Another solution that was discussed was: Could the residents go onto the site — could we gate the existing site, give keys to those folks, and then they pay for someone to come and haul the waste away? The concept of having a place where you store that garbage where it will be safe from wildlife and interactions like that and is paid for — that concept was fine. To put it right on the site where the transfer station had been was not great, because there is a liability with that site. That's what I recall the conversation being about. If there were to be a separate site to be set up, could we support that work for a place to be set aside that the residents would have the responsibility for the site, that they would have the keys, they would pay for the haul — yes, that conversation was met well. I'm not sure that's what they wanted.

Shortly after that, we hit COVID, or maybe that meeting happened during COVID. I just recall us sitting pretty far apart. I'm guessing it was July 2020. We were in the heart of COVID. That was the work that was going on.

To suggest that there weren't meetings with folks, I know that there were. I never turned down an offer to try to meet. I couldn't always make the time that was being asked for, but I never said that we shouldn't meet. I always said that we should. In fact, it's my fault, but on one of those times — and I took two government officials with me — we drove to Johnsons Crossing only to find out that the meeting had been cancelled, and we didn't know. Oh, well; it was a nice drive.

But I am saying this because I want to give the sense that we want to try to do both things here. One is to improve the landfill system, or our solid-waste system across the territory, and one is to continue to serve Yukoners.

One of the ways that the Minister of Community Services talks about how we are increasing the level of service, especially in our smaller communities, is that any single local job is an improvement or an opportunity for those communities. The fact that in Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Tagish, Carcross, and Deep Creek — and as we move forward to these other areas where we then see these facilities staffed up — these are local jobs within those communities, and that is a great thing. It is not always an easy job. I will just say that folks at our landfills have tough jobs, and they are always looking to try to improve. For example, they will always be encouraging people to sort their waste. They will be encouraging people to recycle. They will be doing those sorts of things, and it isn't always great.

Earlier, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King talked about the folks from Whitehorse and the folks from our communities. I want to say that my sense of it is that Yukoners, in general, are pretty responsible around their solid waste. They all think that they should do the right thing — sorry, not all. They almost all think that they should do the right thing. However, there are some folks — and my guess is that they are distributed across the territory, and it is just if you have one person or a few people who put things into our landfills that contaminate the whole site, it becomes super expensive. That is why we have decided that we need a system that is going to be gated and staffed and that is polluter pay — not the full price, as I have said, but just something to send that price signal out there. Part of that, for example, is still held in that solution that I was discussing where if the residents of Johnsons Crossing were using a gated area that they had responsibility for and they were paying for that backhaul, then that polluter pay is there. It is there in the system.

I will stop there. I believe in this as an important thing. I could — if I get a chance again, I will talk about the greenhouse gas emissions and why it works better the way that we are proposing or has been proposed, and I look forward to the rest of the debate today.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Motion No. 856, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

As our society and environment changes, we must ensure that our environmental protection is responsive, dynamic, and adaptive. The Department of Environment works to minimize the impacts on our territory's natural spaces and to develop, manage, and enforce legislation that creates a stronger, cleaner, and more sustainable community. We do this work to ensure that the Yukon continues to thrive and that our territory is protected for future generations of Yukoners. Waste management and recycling is, of course, part of this.

The Department of Environment permits and regulates municipal and commercial solid-waste facilities throughout the Yukon. We ensure that appropriate locations are used and that waste is managed in a way that protects the health and sustainability of our water, land, and air. We collaborate with provinces, territories, and the federal government on solutions like the Canada-wide action plan on zero plastic waste. A key objective of the Council of Ministers of the Environment is to reduce Canada's plastic waste and to create more resilient communities.

In 2022, the territory-wide single-use shopping bag ban for plastic bags came into effect. On January 1 of this year, we also banned paper bags across the territory. We have committed to increase waste diversion by 40 percent in 2030. In 2022, the diversion rate was 30 percent, compared to 25 percent in 2020. So, strides are certainly being made.

Most Yukoners know that everyone has a role to play when it comes to responsible waste management and recycling, but that responsibility does not just fall on the shoulders of Yukoners alone; it is an effort that should start when a product is made, continue through its use or consumption, and end in the latter stages of recycling, reuse, or disposal. Extended

producer responsibility — which is also known as EPR — is a system that will make producers of packaging and products responsible for those materials at the end of the product's life.

The Government of Yukon has a commitment to implement extended producer responsibility by 2025. We are working with partners across the territory — including industry, the City of Whitehorse, communities, and other government departments — in order to develop this efficient and cost-effective waste diversion system. Extended producer responsibility shifts the cost of waste diversion from taxpayers to producers, reducing the significant financial pressure that municipalities and regional governments have to provide recycling services.

We recently published the “what we heard” report on extended producer responsibility. Feedback received will help the Government of Yukon implement an EPR system that meets the needs of Yukoners, reduces our collective waste, and better protects the environment.

As committed to under *Our Clean Future*, the Yukon is on track to implement EPR in the territory by 2025. The priority materials will be paper products and packaging — which includes materials you would normally put in a blue box — and hazardous and special products, such as paints, solvents, and waste oil.

Another issue of responsibility for the Department of Environment is air quality. Air quality plays an important role in the health of our communities. Although the Yukon currently has some of the cleanest air in the world, Canada has seen unprecedented threats to air quality due to increasing wildfires across the north and the west. This development and enforcement of our legislation and air-monitoring initiatives ensure that we continue to have clean air. The Yukon now has real-time air quality data for 11 communities in the territory, which helps inform Yukoners of air quality conditions.

The Department of Environment also works to review and assess the effects development has on the land, air, water, wildlife, and wildlife habitat. Our scientists help to determine ways to mitigate adverse effects that development projects could have on water, soil, fish, and wildlife in order to ensure that industry continues to be successful in a responsible and ethical way. We know that the success of our economy goes hand in hand with the success of our environment. These environmental assessments are critical tools in ensuring that our growth as a territory does not come at the cost of the long-term health of our environment.

In addition to the proactive monitoring and assessment work that we do, in order to ensure that our environment remains healthy, the Department of Environment also works to prevent and respond to the release of contaminants into the environment. The Department of Environment maintains the 24-hour Yukon spill report line, which can be reached at 867-667-7244. When spills are reported, we will work with the responsible party to ensure that contaminants in the soil and water are properly cleaned up. We also permit and regulate businesses that handle and treat contaminated material throughout the Yukon to prevent severe environmental impacts that often come from the release of contaminants. I encourage

Yukoners to visit the online contaminated map site, which provides instant access to information on contaminated sites across the territory.

The obligation to protect the environment from human impacts does not just fall on one sector, government, or industry. It is truly the collective effort of all of us that will ensure that we continue to grow in a way that is responsible and environmentally sustainable. The Department of Environment will continue to support this objective by guiding Yukoners and businesses in doing their part in achieving this important goal. We know that, as the environment changes, our approaches as environmental stewards will need to shift and be adaptive to respond to the environmental challenges that we could face in the future. The Department of Environment will continue to work with community partners across the territory to ensure that the Yukon's environmental legislation meets the needs of Yukoners and protects our environment for generations to come.

This is just some of the work that the Department of Environment is working on in this field.

Related to environmental protection, we are talking today about the closure of transfer stations. The Government of Yukon is taking steps to ensure that waste management in the Yukon is sustainable from both a cost and environmental perspective. As committed to under the confidence and supply agreement, we have consulted with Yukoners who may be impacted by planned closures of solid-waste facilities in Keno, Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn as we transition to a sustainable, regional service model.

Extensively hauling waste from around the Yukon to Whitehorse is no longer an effective solution to waste management. As I heard briefly from the Minister of Community Services, sometimes it is hauling significant waste from Whitehorse to Haines Junction or the Haines Junction area and then having to haul it back to Whitehorse at not insignificant cost. So, that is certainly suboptimal.

A modern solution involves recycling, sorting, and composting organic waste and landfilling the less harmful waste near to where it is produced, ideally. This means making investments in our solid-waste facilities across the territory, and this means supporting our municipal partners to do the same.

As we have heard extensively in debate in this Assembly during the Fall Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, the consultation in this matter has been lengthy and significant and has been over the course of many years. The consultations provided for active and engaged community discussion and will help us tailor the future of solid-waste management in the Yukon. We have recently learned that there are three full-time households in Silver City and a collection of recreational cabins or tourist businesses, many of which are busy during the summer months.

It has been discussed that the waste facility in Destruction Bay is a full-service facility where one can access a variety of waste management services, including brush and clean wood disposal, construction and demolition waste, e-waste collection, household garbage drop-off, household hazardous waste, recyclables, tires, vehicle bodies, waste metals, and

organics disposal options. Destruction Bay is one of the 12 full-service facilities that Yukoners can find all around this beautiful territory.

As we have also heard, residents of Johnsons Crossing can access a full spectrum of waste services approximately 50 kilometres away at the Teslin regional solid-waste facility or 80 kilometres to the Marsh Lake solid-waste facility. I would imagine that the Teslin option would make more sense.

We have also heard that residents of Braeburn will meet as a community to work on community-based solutions to waste management, and they can also access full waste services 64 kilometres away at the Deep Creek solid-waste facility or approximately 67 kilometres away at the Carmacks regional facility.

Circling back to consultation, we continue to work with the residents of each of these areas in order to identify infrastructure for services, such as bear-proof bins or free spring cleanup days, that will make this transition easier. We are committed to supporting all of these residents in their community-led solutions where possible. At the same time, we remain committed to the modern and sustainable regional vision for solid-waste management that we have been working on with the Association of Yukon Communities for many years.

Mr. Speaker, landfills have a limited lifespan, and if care is not taken, groundwater aquifers under the landfill can be impacted. Once at the end of life, a landfill must be formally closed. Landfill closure and environmental monitoring work are important components of responsible waste management. For example, groundwater monitoring continues for a minimum of 25 years after a landfill is closed and the final cover is in place. Reaching sustainability as it relates to landfill management — and in many other areas, of course — should be a common aspiration for all of us.

Diving into this concept, as it relates to waste management at landfills, it is defined as — quote: "... the safe disposal of waste within a landfill, and its subsequent degradation to the inert state in the shortest possible time-span, by the most financially efficient method available, and with minimal damage to the environment..." The time-span issue is critical, as it is not only the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, as we should not pass along the burden of dealing with our generation's waste on to future generations, but also as it determines the potential for environmental accidents during the period of activity of the landfill. Community Services has closure plans in place for all sites.

A risk-based approach to prioritizing former landfill closures — for example, capping with a waterproof membrane with one metre of soil — has been developed and will be in place over the coming years. I am advised that Keno and Braeburn are higher risk facilities, and they are in need of formal closure. The Keno transfer station was, in fact, closed in December 2022. We are pleased to learn that Alexco Resources — now Hecla Yukon — stepped in to provide regularly scheduled waste pickup service to Keno residents. The Yukon government has provided residents with bear-resistant garbage and recycling carts and will also provide large bins for annual, free cleanup days.



We know that waste transfer stations — which are a temporary waste storage facility — are used all around the world to reduce transportation costs. The challenge that those operating the waste transfer station face is the ability to determine when the construction of these facilities becomes beneficial. This brings the issue of trash hold distance, which is the minimum distance between the waste generation nodes and the landfill from which the construction of the waste transfer station becomes economically profitable. In the same analogy, identifying the best location for a landfill is also a critical factor, as it contributes to the optimal design and operations of the landfill.

The work of optimizing the performances of our waste management in the Yukon is something our government takes seriously. We are not reinventing the wheel. We are led by science. We are applying some of these ideas and concepts to our waste management systems in the Yukon. The consultations our government has undertaken address the confidence and supply agreement commitment to consult with impacted communities about household waste-disposal options.

Workshops to date have been productive and generate ideas that the department is exploring with the communities. Landfill liabilities for municipal and Yukon government sites total nearly \$50 million of present value, including Whitehorse. This is not something that we are proud of, but it must be said loud and clear, and I have said this a few times in the Assembly over the last few sessions: Canadians currently generate a huge amount of waste.

In 2018, national solid-waste disposal was estimated at approximately 694 kilograms per person. Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia were estimated to dispose of less than 550 kilograms of solid waste per person. Not to pick on Alberta — but these are the stats that I have been provided with — Alberta was estimated to have generated a whopping 958 kilograms per person. The territories — Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut — Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Ontario all were estimated to have disposed of more than 700 kilograms of waste per person. Those were 2018 statistics, but with waste diversion, additional composting, and other initiatives, we certainly hope that those numbers come down.

We are all accountable for the garbage that we produce. Given increasing pressure to mitigate environmental risk, improve monitoring, and reduce waste management costs over the long term, it is essential that the number of waste management facilities be better managed and that investments be made in the remaining facilities. All Yukoners, both private residents and businesses, share responsibility for waste management and waste diversion. We are pleased to be working with businesses and households on a shared responsibility in adopting best practices for solid-waste management.

I certainly thank the House for the support with respect to the environmental producer responsibility regulations that came into force and effect in the Fall Sitting, and I certainly look forward to being a strong advocate for that plan being put

into place in 2025 in order to continue the meaningful reduction of waste in the territory.

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, transfer stations and waste management facilities are important to every community, regardless of the size of the population or their location. These facilities are important to everyone for environmental reasons, for the health and safety of wildlife and people, and also for the protection of our water, our lands, and air.

We know that Old Crow is still burning their garbage even after a gasifier was installed years ago. The same gasifier has been broken since 2017. Old Crow doesn't have the luxury of driving to a transfer station or having garbage picked up and hauled away. Everything is dealt with locally in the community. As a result, depending on the wind and temperature, smoke and the smell from the burning garbage can envelope the community. As a result, a university study has shown that many dangerous chemicals are leaking into the ground, the groundwater, and Porcupine River. It is directly impacting the people of Old Crow.

Why am I talking about this when we are talking about transfer stations? Because this government is responsible for managing waste throughout the territory. It is this government that purchased and installed the equipment to manage the waste of Old Crow and it is this government that has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of Yukoners — not just the health and safety of Yukoners but our environment, our air, our land, our water, and our wildlife.

Small communities such as Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Beaver Creek — and yes, Old Crow — need to know that their waste is being treated responsibly and ethically. The small communities have not asked for something for nothing, nor is Old Crow.

I support this resolution. We need to ensure the health and safety of all Yukoners and of our environment and we need to ensure that all communities, including Old Crow, are authentically consulted and collaborated with to ensure that the best solutions are found and are sustainable in the long term for all of Yukon.

Mahsi'.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise today to speak to Motion No. 856. I want to thank the Member for Kluane for speaking to the importance of rural Yukon and meaningful consultation.

This past summer, our government sought out as many opportunities as possible to speak with people from our communities, our local leaders, and First Nation governments. I am proud of the work that we have done as a government, meeting with numerous First Nation governments in their traditional territory and attending general assemblies, and, of course, we have held two Yukon Forums at the table together. We have had many discussions and we have met with mayors and municipalities.

In the last few months alone, I have met with Vuntut Gwitchin Government officials, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government officials, Selkirk First Nation government

officials, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation leaders, Ross River Dena Council government leaders, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council government leaders, Kwanlin Dün First Nation government leaders, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations government leaders, and Liard First Nation government leaders. I had planned to meet with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, but that was cancelled due to the evacuation.

We also had an opportunity to attend the Council of Yukon First Nations General Assembly and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council General Assembly. Those were held on June 19 at Helen's Fish Camp. As well, on September 26 and 27, we had Yukon Forum meetings in Dawson City.

Concerning municipalities, we have had opportunities to meet with the municipality of Dawson City leadership in Dawson City. Mayo — mostly just contact directly with the Mayor of Mayo, and that was really focusing on the work that was happening during the evacuation this summer and, as well, some other items concerning some of the more challenging times that the municipality had. Those discussions were earlier in 2023.

As well, I appreciated having the opportunity to spend some time with the Mayor of Watson Lake and really having a chance to look at some priorities — drive through the community with Mayor Irvin and really had a chance to see some of the key items that needed maintenance right away and also areas where there is lots of potential and opportunity for partnership.

Concerning the community of Teslin — having a chance to meet with the mayor and attend community events there — at least one community event where a number of the members here from the Legislative Assembly were also in attendance — it was just great watching the community of Teslin come together — all members of the community, First Nation leaders, municipal leaders — coming together for a great cause.

As well, I appreciated the time to sit with the Mayor of Haines Junction to get a good sense of some of the thoughts and views around priorities and opportunities in that community. Of course, this work is ongoing — this relationship is ongoing — and we have and will continue to meet with Yukon communities and municipalities to discuss their priorities and how we can move together to achieve our shared goals and visions.

As the Minister for Community Services stated, community consultation on this file has occurred and continues to occur. I believe that the minister had stated that 28 public consultations on solid-waste disposal have happened. That includes with the residents of Keno, Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, and Silver City.

The bottom line, as the Minister of Community Services said, is that we so have to do better when it comes to managing our garbage. We owe that not only to today's generation of Yukoners but to the generations of Yukoners to come.

I just want to raise something that I heard the Member for Takhini-Kopper King say in her opening remarks. It was something along the lines of: The residents living in rural Yukon aren't the ones who created the problem, so why should they have to pay for it? I just want to just stop and think about

that comment for a minute. If we, as a government, took that approach — that we didn't create the problem, so we don't have to be part of the solution — where would we be as a government or as a community?

We have heard time and time again in this House the members opposite talk about the climate emergency. There is a lot of talk in this House reminding us not to saddle the generations to come with the environmental debts that we incur today. Tackling big issues like climate change and creating real, meaningful change requires us to take responsibility not only for our own actions but for the reality that we face as a result of the decisions of previous generations. I have to say that I'm concerned to hear that line of debate brought forward by the member opposite: that we are only responsible for the problems we create. Let me tell you that, as a member who came in after 14 years of another party's governance, I wish that were the case, but it's not. We have the responsibility to do better in a number of different areas and we will carry the duty of care to do better than those who came before us. That is what Yukoners expect of us.

We have come a long way with respect to how we deal with our garbage. We used to burn municipal garbage against the advice of Environment Canada, the Yukon Conservation Society, YESAB, and hundreds of community members and community councils. Burning garbage was common throughout the entirety of the Yukon until 2011. Since then, we have worked hard to bring our waste-disposal practices into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, making them more fair and environmentally sustainable.

Whitehorse has been fortunate to have a group of thoughtful citizens dedicated to recycling with Raven Recycling Society, now known as Raven ReCentre, operating since 1989. With the territory now in a position to implement extender producer responsibility, we have seen Raven shift priorities and the City of Whitehorse step up to implement a municipal blue bin program.

These changes are good for the environment, our climate, and our collective health. The cost is that a few Yukoners living in the smallest communities are being asked to carry their garbage to town when they get gas or groceries. Most rural Yukoners already do that. Very few have a free, unsupervised transfer station within a kilometre of their home. As the territory grows and in the face of increased climate change-caused wildfires and floods, we all have a role to pay in lowering our garbage production. Handling our garbage better — separating the organics and the recyclables from the mix — is an important part of that societal effort, and better management of our landfills is key to doing that.

I would like to discuss methane and carbon dioxide production in our current landfill model and dig into it a little bit. When people dump organics into these transfer stations, they are not separated out. Organics consist of food, garden waste, textiles, and wood and paper products. These organics are then transported along with all the waste to a landfill. In the landfill, most gas is produced by bacterial decomposition, which occurs when organic waste is broken down by bacteria

naturally present in the waste and in the soil used to cover the landfill.

From my time on council with the City of Whitehorse, some of the most challenging conversations that occurred were around what would future liability be at the — in that experience, it was to the Whitehorse landfill. But it was a real concern about working with the Government of Yukon and just working as a municipal government in understanding where we were in our reserves and understanding those extra pressures that we continue to keep an eye on when it came to the long-term liabilities and challenges.

It's not something that many Yukoners spend late nights thinking about or understanding the financial implications of these particular challenges when it comes to the work of a municipal finance department. I remember working through these conversations with Mr. Rob Fendrick, and it was always something that was of great concern in his role of trying to ensure that we knew that we had to do better at the landfill.

I have to say, when I look at the leadership that has occurred around Whitehorse — when I think about Marsh Lake, I had an opportunity last year to go there. I brought a lot of clothing to donate. They have a great system in place. I knew that those items would be reused, so my son and I drove out. I spoke to the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes just to understand what happens there. It takes a little bit of time, but everything is there. Hangers are there. You go out and take some time to make sure. It's an incredible system that the community has really supported and got behind.

I also know that folks like — the MLA for Lake Laberge, that community, and I'm sure the MLA felt very strongly about — living out in that area — the fact that there were some real challenges where people would be making that 25- to 35-minute drive and abusing the system. It's important that, in these areas around Whitehorse, where we saw inappropriate dumping — and we know that, between Haines Junction and Beaver Creek, there has been some pretty significant — that there has been some inappropriate behaviour when it comes to dumping. There has been a lot of work, and I know that the Member for Kluane has also been focused on ensuring that, in some of those really rural areas, there is not inappropriate activity happening — whether it is abandoned vehicles or if it is industrial waste that shouldn't be dumped.

There are people who take advantage of these particular structures. For us on this side of the floor, I have listened very closely and respectfully to the conversations that have happened around the folks in those areas, and I know that the goal has been to try to come up with a series of solutions — really — solutions and, at the same time, ensuring that there is an understanding that people have been inappropriately using this infrastructure and doing it, and it can cause some really significant costs and challenges.

As I touched on earlier, landfill gases can be created when certain wastes — particularly organic compounds — change from liquid or solid into a vapour, and this process is known as volatilization. Landfill gas can be created by reactions of certain chemicals present in waste. For example, if chlorine

bleach and ammonia come in contact with each other within a landfill, harmful gas can be produced.

Landfills often accept waste over 20- or 30-year periods, so waste in a landfill may be undergoing several phases of decomposition at once. This means that older waste in one area might be in a different phase of decomposition than more recently buried waste in another area. When it comes to climate change or global warming, whichever term you prefer, the time to act was yesterday, and we know that here. We see that every spring. We certainly saw that over the last number of years, where we have seen this increase in fire activity, and we have seen this increase as well.

I think it has been fair to say that, in the areas when it comes to the partnership — and I still believe it's in place — with Hecla — I think there has been — I want to thank them for their community partnership in Keno. I did attend, with the previous Minister of Community Services, conversations with municipal leaders on this topic and heard both — as we walked through that — concerns as well as opportunities to work together. Specifically, I can remember our meetings in Mayo with the previous Mayor of Mayo, and I think that there generally are some ways that we can help here. I think there is a lot of folks in these communities, although small in number, who have put together some good ideas, and in many cases, as the Member for Kluane touched on, some of those new operations are thriving tourism businesses. I will say that I want to touch on that comment.

I know that the Member for Kluane said that they want to know that there are supports in a number of areas. I would say, look — I know that the Member for Kluane was a champion of the — I think it touched on renewables, tourism, a number of different types of engagement in that region that he represents. I would say: Look, I think, although it gets challenging here in the House to commend any work by the current government from the Official Opposition, but the Member for Kluane I think should be happy that, you know, number one, there is a wind turbine project that — there were dollars in a line item, but there was no independent power production mechanism to actually be able to build that turbine and then have that energy sold into the grid. So, we did that, and we supported that work that the Member for Kluane believed in.

Also, I know that the Member for Kluane has brought different concerns and information to the House from the community of Beaver Creek, and I think that we did a lot of work — I know that, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, when things got tough, we brought everybody together and workshopped the key items and challenges when it came to Beaver Creek, and that meant bringing CIRNAC Canada — the federal government — to the table with Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation and making sure that the right amount of money was in place to build a solid solar project for that community. That work has been carried on very well with great leadership by the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

When it comes to tourism, you know, there has been — in previous roles and having a chance to work with the Department of Tourism and Culture and carried on by my

colleague the Minister for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, we have tried to refocus, as well, on the Kluane region and support the work being done, whether that is through the marketing of some of the operations and organizations that the Member for Kluane highlighted earlier or just generally trying to coordinate the approach to supporting tourism in that area. I think that a lot of things that the MLA for Kluane said — that the community is looking to see — as I chart back over the last number of years, even through the disruption that we had in 2020 and 2021, we have tried to make sure that — and effectively done the work — to see the folks in that jurisdiction realize their priorities and their interests.

Thank you for giving me a chance to talk about this today. We are trying to ensure that we are working closely with our community members — truly. Some of these decisions are tough decisions. There is tough change, but we are trying to figure out good ways to work hand in hand with the ideas that are coming forward. I look forward to hearing more ideas today from the members opposite.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to the motion brought forward by the Third Party, the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King, which urges the Government of Yukon to keep the solid-waste transfer stations open at Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn until solutions that meet the solid-waste disposal needs in each community are found.

We have heard from a lot of colleagues here today. We have heard a lot of interesting words from the current Minister of Community Services, speaking very passionately about the need to address waste management in the territory in an environmentally prudent manner. This is a topic of interest for myself, as a rural MLA, but I also think that I will focus my attention more on my role as the Minister of Finance and look at this from a more fiscally concerned manner in general, but again, I will probably veer off that and into my urban background as well.

The Government of Yukon has been working toward modernizing the management of waste in the territory for an awfully long time. I watched the Yukon Party when I was in opposition start to tackle this concept. I have watched two ministers of Community Services, which brings us all here today to this debate. Part of this process has involved investment in 12 regional sites right across the territory, creating full-service, modern facilities that provide residents of unincorporated areas with the best possible management for solid waste. These sites will provide full-service facilities that include composting, recycling collection, household waste collection, and all the other services residents expect from a properly managed, environmentally responsible solid-waste facility.

We have put a focus on making sure that waste is disposed of in properly looked after sites, which is extremely important when we talk about the costs. There are environmental costs and there are financial costs. I want to examine some of the financial considerations around these decisions and where they stand now.

The transfer stations at Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn were all marked for closure, going back some years. The 2019 environmental liability report that was issued in 2020 confirmed that these sites were ready to close at that time. You may ask why we don't reverse this decision and keep them open. The issue is that the sites aren't being actively managed. Any costs associated with these transfer stations are earmarked for closure and monitoring the sites after these closures are completed.

So, closure work is yet to start, but in the meantime, these sites are not being actively run, and the waste isn't being managed properly. Our plan is to have residents bring their waste to properly managed sites within driving distance in places where they will already be going. We talked a lot about that — about a lot of movement through the communities and properly disposing of waste as folks head to larger centres where these facilities will be.

We trust that this will not be an undue burden on residents and that it could be part of existing trips, although we do recognize that there is an issue of convenience here. For the three places listed, there are such facilities within 60 kilometres. The upside is that the waste will go to a properly managed site, benefiting the environment and allowing for a more efficient allocation of resources. The upside is obvious to that.

To accommodate this move, we are increasing funding to the municipalities through interim regional agreements. In return, municipalities manage these sites. That is already the case now. Municipalities manage their own solid-waste facilities. It is only in unincorporated Yukon communities that this falls to the Government of Yukon. That includes transporting items, like recycling, to facilities that can be processed — those types of materials in Whitehorse, for example.

In regard to the budget, closing the sites at Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn has some advantages. One is an obvious consequence, which is just a savings in operational costs for not managing these three sites, although this is a very small detail. Another more important aspect is that we can start work on closure and post-closure earlier, and that reduces future value of the liabilities associated with closing, remediating, and monitoring these sites.

The Government of Yukon is responsible for environmental monitoring of groundwater of these sites for 25 years. Responsibly managing waste means formally closing the landfills and environmental monitoring, and that work, of course, will happen after the closures. The longer you wait, the more environmental impact a site can have and the costs go up for dealing with that.

In the short term, dumping of materials, burning of garbage, and other activities at unmonitored sites will end up with another huge price tag. For example, the cost of a typical oil spill at an unmanaged site could run up to \$50,000. Leaving the gates open increases the risk of this happening. No matter whose responsibility, it will still be a liability for the Yukon government to deal with the aftermath.

At a managed, gated site, we can exert more control over illegal dumping and reduce our operational costs for cleanup and managing incidents at the sites. We're not moving ahead on these closures site unseen. We consulted with Yukoners who are going to be affected by these coming transfer station closures. Together we will work toward a more sustainable model of waste management through the regional service model. After all, we have to take responsibility for the waste that we do create.

With growing needs to mitigate environmental risk, improve our monitoring, and reduce the management of waste over the long term, we have to make sure that Yukon waste management facilities are properly managed. To tackle the modern era, we need to have waste processed close to where it is produced. Having this happen in multiple small waste sites across the territory isn't an efficient or responsible way to make this happen.

Instead, we need to invest in a set number of solid-waste facilities. Consolidating the number of sites where we dispose of the waste has the added benefit of reducing the environmental footprint of waste management activities. This holds true even far down the line, since closing a limited number of sites and monitoring them afterwards will cost less overall than doing the same for a larger number of sites spread across the territory. After all, in a closed waste management facility, you still have to pay for getting the site properly shut down and monitoring it thereafter. Fewer is better in regard to these costs.

By having waste management facilities, concentrated municipalities' regional agreements ensure the best practices are followed at these facilities. The Government of Yukon can also share the cost with municipalities for closing facilities and monitoring them afterward. It is difficult to provide an average cost breakdown for a solid-waste transfer station under the old model. The truth is that the costs can vary greatly.

That being said, a site that serves a smaller population can run a much higher per capita cost than a larger facility that serves more area residents. Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn all fall into this category.

I would point out, as the Minister of Community Services has said in this House since the beginning of the session, that the Yukon government is implementing recommendations jointly developed by YG, the Association of Yukon Communities, and the City of Whitehorse. These are recommendations informed by discussions with all partners as well as previous work, such as the Association of Yukon Communities' solid-waste management vision from 2016 when the members opposite were in government and this journey began.

After the recommendations were completed, they were handed over to an implementation advisory group that included the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities, plus representatives from four different municipalities — an interim agreement that has been signed on to by Teslin, Mayo, and Carmacks. All of these municipalities are taking charge of their landfills and buying into this plan, which was brought to the Yukon government in 2016 and again

in 2017 by the Association of Yukon Communities. We're following through with the requests from the AYC.

The Minister of Community Services has been throughout the territory this past summer. Earlier, he spoke with mayors and councillors. He has shared with this Chamber that this is not an issue that comes up in his discussions with municipalities that are providing the services to handle waste in the territory, but they are asking that the Yukon government approach waste management and address the environmental liabilities that they present and that we should be doing that responsibly.

I did have the honour to head out on some community tours with the former Minister of Community Services as well. We stopped off and had conversations about waste management in Carmacks, Faro, and Keno as well. When you take a look at the number of years that this has been consulted on and how many communities our ministers went through — and I am not sure about the previous government and how many communities they consulted with in their year or so when the AYC brought this to their attention — but this has been consulted on for a very long time.

I think that the Department of Community Services has done an exemplary job, just like countless other departments and public servants, talking to communities and coming up with mitigations to help make the transition to a much better and much more manageable supply of our waste-disposal sites in the territory. It's extremely important that we do that, not only for the environment but also for the municipalities, because the municipalities said that the existing system — the old system — was not sustainable.

The Minister of Community Services and his team — and the previous minister from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — have stepped forward. We want to make sure that our garbage is managed in a way that is responsible to the environment and responsible to our municipalities. From their direction, they want to make sure that garbage going into our sites is managed in a way that is sustainable and environmentally sound as well.

They want gates. They want to have sorting inside of those transfer stations so that the garbage goes in one pile and compost in another — that type of thing. They want to cut methane and other greenhouse gases as well.

We want to make sure that we do this properly and that we are doing this in conjunction with the residents and with the municipalities. Many Yukoners know that the Yukon Liberals and the Yukon NDP have developed, since 2021, a working relationship as two separate teams. This was borne out of a recognition that the Yukon is facing many challenges and that Yukoners benefit from having a stable government and MLAs working together to address the challenges that Yukoners face. Addressing the problems will take bold actions. These are not my words; these are the words taken from the confidence and supply agreement that was made with the Third Party.

As folks know, I was at least a little involved with the creation of the first CASA, but now, as our new Premier, the Member for Porter Creek South, signed a new agreement with the Leader of the Third Party — the mover of this motion that we are debating today — a particular commitment between the

two teams was articulated, among other policy initiatives, that our government is to — and I quote: “... consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in Keno, Johnson’s Crossing, Silver City and Braeburn.” I will note for the record that the CASA commitment did also include Keno, but as members know and as the minister could address in more detail, the Keno rural waste management needs have been addressed and are in a bit of a different situation than the other unincorporated communities that we are speaking of here.

I raise this as the New Democratic Party previously agreed that this is the way for the government to move forward on rural waste management — that we should consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options. Understandably, given that agreement and the approach, that is precisely what our tremendous public servants at Community Services have been working on and basing their work on.

I think that it is appropriate that we remain consistent and that we continue to provide the public servants with the direction that is fiscally responsible and environmentally responsible and provide clarity to Yukoners on what is happening. I think that the minister responsible has made it clear that this is exactly what has been happening.

Given all of this, I would like to move an amendment to the current motion. The amendment, if adopted, will change the motion to be consistent with the wording of the commitment made by our Yukon Liberal government in the confidence and supply agreement made in January 2023.

*Amendment proposed*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move:

THAT Motion No. 856 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase “keep the solid-waste transfer stations open at” and inserting in its place the phrase “continue to consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in”; and
- (2) deleting the phrase “until solutions that meet the solid-waste disposal needs of each community are found”.

**Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Finance:

THAT Motion No. 856 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase “keep the solid-waste transfer stations open at” and inserting in its place the phrase “continue to consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in”; and
- (2) deleting the phrase “until solutions that meet the solid-waste disposal needs of each community are found”.

If amended, Motion No. 856 would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn.

Is there any debate on the amendment?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, earlier, I laid out how the closures of these sites will benefit Yukoners and the financial decisions that went into them. I know that, given the financial

environmental liabilities, the Minister of Community Services is taking those considerations seriously, all while continuing to address things in the spirit of the CASA commitment. So, the work is ongoing and his team is looking for solutions. I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues and am just grateful to be able to be here debating this on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I will conclude my comments at that.

**Ms. White:** It’s interesting, because in so many different arenas when there is a motion on the floor and an amendment is proposed, often it’s viewed as a friendly amendment — something to strengthen or improve, and I have to say that this is not friendly. This totally takes away the intention of the original motion, which is to ensure that the solid-waste transfer facilities are open until a solution may be found with those communities who are affected. I don’t think it will surprise yourself or anyone in the room that the Yukon NDP will be voting against this proposed amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise today to echo the sentiments of my colleagues on this side of the House who have risen before me to speak today to the proposed amendment — my colleague from Klondike — and to the motion, which is mirroring the wording from CASA. Our government has been working to create and modernize our services and our systems and agreements across our departments to create new opportunities and efficiencies, to build healthy communities and invest in our collective future. This undertaking requires many engagements, which we identified earlier today, and consultations with stakeholders, such as our communities and municipalities, First Nation governments, and industry.

Since 2017, our government has conducted over 100 territory-wide public engagements about a broad range of topics and initiatives, and we have consulted with Yukoners on so many different things: school facilities, barriers to Indigenous recruitment and retention, land use planning, community safety, health initiatives, and transfer stations, as we spoke about today, just to name a few of the consultations that we have facilitated.

This government takes the responsibility of consultation with communities and partners very seriously, and we have been doing this since we have begun the consultations regarding waste transfer stations specifically, throughout this year, in a number of communities, with over half of Yukon communities signing on to our interim regional agreements. As outlined in the 2018 recommendations of the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste, we have signed interim regional agreements with Watson Lake, Mayo, Carmacks, and Teslin. We are modernizing waste management facilities across the territory to reduce the environmental and operational risks, while also ensuring sustainable access to waste-disposal services for all Yukoners in years to come.

Through this, we have been investing in upgrades to landfills and transfer stations, including our recent implementation of composting at some facilities. These measures are to move toward efficient, cost effective, and sustainable solid-waste systems to benefit Yukoners now and

looking into the future. Such measures, under the interim regional agreements, are gates, site management, and monitoring tipping fees, which limits the dumping of hazardous waste materials that have serious impacts on the environment and wildlife.

As part of this process and in line with our CASA agreement, the department is working with communities to schedule meetings and consultations to determine household waste-disposal options. In our CASA commitments, there is a specific line that reads: "... consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in Keno, Johnson's Crossing, Silver City and Braeburn." We feel that we have been upholding this commitment as we move forward with the modernization of transfer stations across the Yukon and in the implementation of the recommendations from the ministerial committee.

Over the summer and into the fall, there were meetings with Keno, Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn residents to provide opportunity for members of the community to share their ideas and concerns, examine challenges and opportunities, and discuss options and workable solutions related to household waste disposal. Through our meetings and consultations with Keno, there has been a solution reached with Keno residents and Hecla Mining to see waste collection in the Keno community. As of November of last year, Keno received bear-resistant garbage receptacles, recycling carts, and a trailer provided by the Government of Yukon to assist Hecla in transporting the waste to a nearby facility. This is one example of community members and partners, alongside the Yukon government, coming to the table and adopting creative solutions to waste management.

We have been committed to consulting residents and finding workable household waste-disposal options with and for them. Many of our community landfills are not staffed or monitored, which sees an increase of illegal dumping, which we have heard in some of the previous statements here today.

The 2023 confidence and supply agreement has provided Yukoners with opportunities that we would not otherwise have been able to achieve on our own. Again, I'm proud of the positive outcomes for Yukoners that stem from this agreement. I stand by this agreement and the wording it contains. The wording is thoughtful and, of course, intentional. For that reason, I believe that the wording as written in the 2023 confidence and supply agreement and that we have proposed as an amendment is and should continue to be the way forward on this file.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, back to the amendment, the first thing that I want to talk about with it is just a follow-up on what the Premier was discussing and to talk about Keno and how we will work with these other communities — Silver City, Braeburn, Johnsons Crossing — and just to give a shout-out to Hecla. They stepped in and helped the community. I thought it was a really neighbourly thing to do. Also, it's Hecla that is dealing with the polluter-pay part of this, not the residents of Keno City. At least that part of it is being upheld by the mining company. I appreciate what

they're doing for the community. If we find solutions like that in the other communities, then terrific. I'm still hopeful that those solutions still maintain that polluter-pay piece.

With respect to the amendment saying that we should allow this conversation to happen, I don't think anyone — well, I hope no one here is disagreeing with that part of the amendment, that if the amendment were to go through, that we would continue to consult with communities. I think that is not what is of concern to — well, I haven't heard from the Yukon Party, but I'm guessing that they also were concerned with the amendment, but the NDP, when they rose just now — when the Leader of the NDP rose to speak to it — they said not supportive of it, because it takes away the essence of the original motion, which is talking about that you have to have that solution first.

Now, let's just talk for a second about those communities — Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn. Even though we have had the adopted strategy in place for five years — five and a half, let's say — and the recommendations from the Association of Yukon Communities seven and a half years ago — so, we have not closed those facilities, and we have been in dialogue with them, but the concern that I just heard from the NDP was that this would be too much pressure on those places.

What I wonder — and this is when I had my conversations with Johnsons Crossing — we did not take away from the notions of those solutions that we are talking about, but I did hold onto the need to make sure that we were adopting this overall approach for the environment, which was that we would have staffed and gated facilities, that there would be polluter-pay, and that we would work to levelize that across regions. We know that the problem — every landfill — municipality, Yukon territorial government run — whoever the groups are that are running them are concerned about contamination.

In the amendment, just talking to this reference to the confidence and supply agreement, I just want to note that the agreement is from the recently signed — I think earlier this year, 2023 — it is not the confidence and supply agreement that the Yukon Party agreed to or what they said was that they would agree to it. It is always a little bit difficult for me to track where they are on that, because sometimes they say that they agree with it, and sometimes they say that they disagree with it.

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

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yes, it was certainly the Yukon Party's willingness to seek to support the confidence and supply agreement so that they would assume government. That is what they had talked about. I have not heard them on this one. I hope that they would be supportive of talking with communities. They say that is important; the Yukon Party says that it is important to talk to communities. Although, as I have noted recently in debate around, for example, a citizens' assembly, they voted against that, even though that is what Yukoners asked for. So, I am not quite sure where they are with these issues, but they have spoken pretty clearly that they don't believe that we should close these transfer stations in these smaller communities.

I now will have to check back to the words from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin today, because he did talk about

some of those principles that he agreed with, and so I will check on those.

With respect to the amendment that is here, it is still that we should have that engagement and that conversation. The difference is that — and what I will say — and let me talk for a minute about the public servants who have been doing this work. I travelled with them to many communities, and one of those was Johnsons Crossing. I had the assistant deputy minister with me — or an assistant deputy minister — and I had the director of operations, who deals with our solid-waste facilities and funding them and supporting them. Those folks are pretty dedicated to a couple of principles: one, the principle of talking with communities; and two, finding solutions that will work to improve the overall system to uphold the values that are underneath the strategy that was brought forward and also work within the community. So, I — and sorry; I travelled with him as well to Keno, and we went over a range of solutions that might work.

So, here we are — I forget what the number is that the minister had added up in terms of the number of engagements, and I would have to look back, but quite a few, and those are happening in the communities. We have one, apparently, that is happening today. I didn't know about it ahead of this debate, but I have heard several people talk about it in Silver City, and I will say that the public servants who have been going to these meetings have been there in the spirit of finding solutions. So, you know, the amendment that we have before us — that we are debating right now — isn't about not working with communities; in fact, that is what it says: If we were to pass the amendment, it would be to continue to consult and engage with the communities to determine household waste-disposal options for them.

The part that is not in there and is not in the original motion is this notion of upholding the overall values that are trying to be sought by the territory-wide strategy. That is the part that is missing for me in the original motion, and at least, if we go for this amendment, we will not be holding ransom the progress. I will say that the work that I have seen of the public servants in the communities seeks to find solutions.

Now, the last thing I will say about the amendment that we have in front of us is just about these questions in the environment. For Yukoners who might listen in or for the members of the communities who check these transcripts later on, there seems to be this argument from the opposition members that it is not environmentally friendly to close landfills, and we keep saying that it is. What seems to me to be at the heart of that is how people take their garbage to the landfill or transfer station.

I live outside of Whitehorse, and I can tell you the way in which I do it, which is that I wait for a moment when I am going to be heading by the landfill. I think that's a pretty common thing for most Yukoners. We make the best of our trips. We even call them "town days", when we decide to come in, buy groceries, fill up the truck, do all of our errands, and, at the same time, as we drive past the landfill, we will stop in and drop off our garbage. Now, of course, in Marsh Lake, it's costing \$1 a bag. That's what I and my neighbours all have to pay. That trip,

then, isn't an additional trip that I'm trying to do just to take the garbage; it's a trip alongside of other things. That's where the difference lies in this debate.

My impression is that all Yukoners are pretty frugal with their time and don't want it to be wasted, and so they wait. Of course, we know that, where I live anyway, we don't have a gas station; we don't have a grocery store. I will say that I miss Tilly's, just for those who remember Tilly's, but that's the way this is. We don't have all the services in our community, so we make the best of trips.

The amendment that the Member for Klondike proposed, in my mind, keeps us in that dialogue with communities where we work to find a solution together. That's why I support the amendment. I think that it was what we agreed to under the confidence and supply agreement. I will say, from my experience with the public servants, that it's exactly what they have been trying to do through engagement with those residents.

By the way, when I rose to speak to the main motion, I listed off some solutions that we had worked out with the residents of Braeburn. What I don't get — because I have had conversations with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King where we talked about potential solutions, and one of the ones that I listed off today — at least what she indicated to me was that it would be fine. Yet I don't understand, then, why it's not fine for Braeburn, having had us discuss it some three or three and a half years ago.

I look forward to further debate on the amendment and seeing whether we agree on whether this is an improvement to the original motion.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the amendment this afternoon for a little while. I think it has been an important discussion this afternoon. I think it's obviously an issue that many people in this House take very seriously, and I think the more we can talk about how we deal with our garbage, the better off we are.

The amendment that we proposed this afternoon is directly in line with the confidence and supply agreement that we struck with the New Democratic Party caucus in 2023. We're working to make good on that commitment that we made through the confidence and supply agreement.

I will say this afternoon that I was heartened, actually, to hear the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin start talking about the environment this afternoon. I think that's important. I think that cuts to the very heart of this issue — the environment in the territory, and I think that shouldn't be lost. I know the Leader of the Third Party is trying to bifurcate the discussion, saying that, no, this isn't about the environment; this is about rural Yukon. But really, at its heart, this is about municipalities, it's about how we manage our garbage, how we look after our environment better, and how we get to the 45-percent greenhouse gas reduction that we committed to through *Our Clean Future* with the support of the New Democratic caucus.

The way that we manage our landfills will help us reach that 45-percent target, but we can't reach it if we don't act. Here we are again — I've seen it before — with delays on issues that



we could be acting on in a climate emergency that then become delayed and pushed out because of issues that we have to work through that are legitimate for the individuals who we're working through and we are working through to the point of the amendment —

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

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to use Standing Order 19(b), which speaks to matters other than the topic under discussion right now. The amendment to the motion is very clear. It is very short; it is very concise, and I appreciate that the minister is looking to repeat his comments from the initial debate, but I believe that the discussion is supposed to be about the amendment.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** On the point of order, the minister has been speaking for two minutes, and I am sure that he is going to get to the amendment topic.

Minister of Community Services, please continue.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying just moments ago, as far as the amendment goes, the amendment actually restores the intention through the confidence and supply agreement that was negotiated and says that we will continue to consult with communities to determine household waste-disposal options in Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn. The only difference from the original confidence and supply agreement is that Keno is no longer on the list, and that is because we have found solutions for Keno, which was our government working in good faith under the confidence and supply agreement.

What we are saying with the amendment today is that this is an important discussion to have with municipalities, but — and there is a big “but” here — because the environment cannot be forgotten in these discussions, we have to eventually move ahead with the intention of the *Solid Waste Action Plan*, which was initially proposed by the Association of Yukon Communities in 2016 for the benefit of the environment.

Here I think is where there is a little bit of a disagreement — a difference between ourselves and the New Democratic caucus on the intent of the agreement that we struck. I see it as a — this whole initiative to deal with landfills in the territory is, at its heart, a discussion about the environment. We are going to continue to talk about options for community members who would be affected in Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn, but we will do so, and we will do so in good faith to come up with real options. As a matter of fact, this afternoon, right now, at the moment, we are talking to residents of Silver City and hearing and discussing ways to reach a solution so that we can actually help the transition for these residents of rural Yukon to the new model, which is a regional landfill model.

Now, it is also important, I might add, to the Yukon Conservation Society, which as I said earlier today, wrote me a letter. The letter does cut to the heart of the discussion about

the amendment that we put on the table today, because the Conservation Society says — which is directly relevant to our discussion on the amendment — that closures should only be done as long as there is an alternative landfill within a reasonable distance and there is support for waste diversion to the greatest extent possible. Basically, what they are saying is to please do appropriate public education and transition plans as part of the initiative, which is exactly what we are doing under the confidence and supply agreement.

The reason why this is important to the Yukon Conservation Society — in its letter, it says that these facilities — these regional landfills — are not cheap to operate, but compared with the cost of environmental cleanups at non-standard facilities, it is easily worth the cost of implementation. The Yukon Conservation Society recognizes that some currently existing smaller landfills will have to close. It is not possible to implement the solid-waste management for northern or remote communities guidelines in an environmentally and fiscally appropriate manner at some of these landfills. However, closures should only be done as long as there is an alternative landfill within a reasonable distance and there is support for waste diversion to the greatest extent possible.

Well, we are working very, very hard with the communities and the residents affected by the regionalization program, but as the Yukon Conservation Society says in its letter, having these waste transfer stations in very, very small communities is just not doable. It isn't fiscally responsible, and logistically, it is almost impossible to do. The reason why they think that this is important is that they are concerned about unregulated garbage disposal in community landfills across the Yukon.

So, when we were negotiating the original confidence and supply agreement, we wanted to make sure that we dealt with the residents of these rural communities, as we say in the amendment that we are talking about right now, but we also wanted to make sure that people understood that there will eventually have to be change, because as we have heard, in the Yukon, people dump shop. They will go to places that are open, places for garbage, and they will dispose of their garbage — their waste oil, their transmissions, their cars, industrial waste, construction waste — at these sites to avoid paying the tipping fees and to just get it off their lot or out of their house.

As I heard in Haines Junction just two weeks ago, that is happening in Haines Junction, which has a landfill, but people are actually driving hundreds of kilometres to dispose of their waste in a municipal landfill that is not controlled because it is available and because people want to get rid of the garbage they produce cheaply in ways that are not necessarily convenient but that gets it off their lot.

So, this is what municipalities are dealing with across the Yukon. It's why the regionalization initiative that we have proposed is fair and responsible. It's flexible; it involves the community; it's important for us, and that is at the heart of this amendment that we are proposing today: that we involve community members in the discussions and help facilitate and ease their transition to a regional landfill model.

The regional landfill model that we are talking about this afternoon came out of the *Solid Waste Management: Vision for a Sustainable Model for Yukon Communities* that the Association of Yukon Communities put in place in 2016. For us, we came into office in 2016. In 2017, the Association of Yukon Communities came to us and said: Please initiate this plan.

I mention that because we talk about the civil servants who are working on the regionalization plan at Community Services, and they are doing a tremendous job. They are doing a tremendous job even as we speak — consulting with communities, which is really the heart and soul of the amendment that we are talking about this afternoon.

But there is more to this. There were more experts involved and very clever people came around to build this plan. One of the recommendations of this plan was to make sure that there were no places where Yukoners can avoid going to a controlled and managed landfill.

As we move toward that model, we have to continue to talk to Yukoners. That is important. That is what the amendment addresses today and that is exactly what we are going to do and have been doing, which is why Keno is no longer on the list. But I think it's important as well to recognize and thank the people who were originally involved to develop this plan. I am thinking about — well, there are a number of them, actually, and they are listed in that report. They include: Cory Bellmore, who used to live in Dawson; Ian Dunlop, the former CAO of Faro; Margrit Wozniak of Mayo; Shelley Hassard of Teslin; Monika Schitteck, who represented Haines Junction; Christine Smith of Whitehorse; Bryna Cable of Whitehorse; David Albisser, who is working for Whitehorse; Dave Hatherley of Haines Junction; Cole Hunking of Teslin; Norm Carlson of Dawson; Tony Radford for the Yukon government; Bev Buckway, who was working for the Association of Yukon Communities; and Laura Eby of the Association of Yukon Communities. These are the people who came up with the plan that we're trying to implement and have been working on since 2017 — for six years. It's a plan that actually is more than that now — seven years old now. They drafted this 17-page report upon which all of our actions that we are talking about this afternoon are based.

We know, as our amendment says, that we cannot advance this without speaking to Yukoners and working with them, which is why the great folks at Community Services have worked so hard to come up with solutions for the residents who are transitioning to this new model.

I know that members opposite have said that it is going to come quickly, but we have been talking about this for a very long time now. I think it is well understood that eventually change is going to have to happen if this model is going to work. This is a model, as I have noted, that some very smart people worked on, endorsed, and pushed to have us embrace and advance, which my colleague the member from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes worked very hard on at the beginning.

Since we started on this journey, we have actually had numerous consultations — 28 in total, dozens — including

consulting with people in Braeburn, in Johnsons Crossing, and in Silver City. Again, we are still talking today, which cuts to the heart of the amendment that we have today — that we have committed to talk and we will continue to talk to members of those communities to make sure that the transition to a new system is eased.

At the heart is the environment and also putting on a polluter pay principle that actually forces people to consider how much garbage they are producing, and it makes sure that they deal with it in a responsible manner. To the Yukon Conservation Society's point, they want to make sure that diversion is part of it as well, which is where, just this session, we started talking about extended producer responsibility and how that is going to help finance some of the changes we are making to the waste stream in the territory — certainly in Whitehorse. It's all part of making sure that we do better for future generations.

My colleague the Minister of Finance had some great points this afternoon in that the faster we get these transfer stations dealt with — it lessens the liability that we will have in the future.

The overarching goal here is to make sure that people do not circumvent the managed and controlled landfills that we are investing in across the Yukon — investing in rural Yukon for the betterment of all Yukoners — and circumventing that by a roadside stop where you can do it for free. That's important.

But it is a change and it is a change to a way of life that has been going on for a very long period of time — tens of years. People are invested in that. We have to transition. We have to make it easier for them to transition to a better model so that they do understand what the cost of their garbage is and what the impacts of the waste that we're producing have on the environment. It also makes sure that municipalities are not left paying for garbage, industrial waste, commercial waste, and everything else that goes along with it — that they have no revenue for. These are people outside the municipalities' borders who are bringing garbage and waste of all types within their facility — that they have to pay for. That's simply not fair.

We're trying to bring a fairness and an accountability to the model for the way that we produce waste and handle waste in the territory that hasn't been seen before. I think we have to make sure that we do this in a responsible manner, which is why, through the amendment that we put before the House today, we want to make sure that those conversations happen. They have been happening and we want to make sure that they continue to happen. It's certainly my goal, which is why, working with the Department of Community Services, I have asked that we hold consultations and gather community input to hear ideas from the community that will help us facilitate a better waste management regime in the Yukon.

That work is vital to the success of the larger venture. I know that the team at Community Services is deeply invested in that. They believe in what we're doing. I think that anybody who has had to deal with waste or garbage in the territory knows that we have to do it better. Municipalities have told us that. But in order to advance this, we really do have to get buy-in from the people most affected by this, which will be people

living in small unincorporated communities who will have to carry garbage eventually to a regional site. That's going to be a transition for sure.

We worked with Keno and learned some lessons from working with the small community of Keno. We are now taking that knowledge and putting it to use in Braeburn, in Johnsons Crossing, and also in Silver City. Even as we talk, there is a Teams call going on that is actually soliciting good ideas from the year-round residents of Silver City. I look forward to hearing what ideas come out of today's meeting.

Thank you for the time to talk to the amendment this afternoon, and I want to hear what other people have to say this afternoon.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly had no intentions of speaking to this amendment, but it seems pretty obvious that the Minister of Environment has a 20-minute speech set up and ready to go, so we clearly are not going to get to vote on this amendment or the motion. I am going to take a minute or two of your time and give you some thoughts.

Firstly, if this wasn't such an important issue to many people's lives, I would say that what has happened here today is almost comical, but it is not funny. I think that the irony of this amendment is just beyond comprehension — I mean, to amend the motion to say that we are going to continue to consult with communities. The whole point of this debate and the previous motion was about the lack of consultation. So, for the government to suddenly say that they are going to continue — if you don't start something, you can't continue it. You have to begin first.

My colleague from Kluane today used a quote that the Leader of the NDP, from her discussions with the minister during Community Services debate — where she said that being told the outcome is not consultation — and I think that is very important, because it is not. We just heard the minister stand here and say that there were lessons learned from Keno. I am not really sure that there have been any lessons learned, because they haven't learned the definition of "consultation" yet, so I'm not sure what lessons he could have learned.

I also wanted to make very clear that this is not about the public servants; this about this government. This is about Cabinet — the ones who sit here and make the decisions. Yes, they pass on the direction to the public servants, and the public servants have to go out and meet with those people and try to relay the wishes of Cabinet. But when the decision has already been made, that is not consultation and it never will be.

Another problem with this amendment is that it doesn't give any assurances for those citizens in those communities. To say that we won't close them until the solutions have been found — so, now they have nothing. They don't know if it's going to be tomorrow or next Wednesday or the following Thursday when their transfer station gets closed — except for the guarantee of the words of the members opposite, and I think that it was worn thin a long time ago.

Another thing that was interesting to hear from the members opposite — and every one of them who spoke talked about the engagements and the dialogue that have taken place,

but not one of them, to the best of my knowledge, actually said the "consultation that had taken place". Again, that leads me to believe that this Liberal government really doesn't understand the definition of "consultation" and I think that they continue to prove it over and over.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, I had no intention of speaking to this amendment, and I had really hoped that we would have voted on this motion, but here we are. Thank you for your time.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

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

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Mr. Dixon:** Disagree.

**Mr. Kent:** Disagree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Disagree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Disagree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Disagree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Disagree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Disagree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Disagree.

**Ms. Blake:** Disagree.

**MLA Tredger:** Disagree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 7 yea, 11 nay.

**Speaker:** The nays have it.

I declare the amendment defeated.

*Amendment to Motion No. 856 negatived*

**Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the main motion?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Motion No. 856. I am going to bring a little bit of a different perspective to the debate that we have heard so far today. I wanted to just start with the whole notion of seven generations, that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future.

Teaching children about climate change and recycling is so important. It empowers them to understand the environmental challenges that our planet faces and encourages responsible behaviour from an early age. By educating children, we instill values of sustainability, conservation, and eco-consciousness,

fostering a generation that is more likely to make informed choices and take proactive steps toward a healthier planet.

Today's debate, Mr. Speaker, I think has focused quite a lot around this notion. I really want to talk about some of the work we are doing in Education to ensure that our children are educated and that it's woven into the curriculum that we have. Fortunately, our redesigned curriculum offers a strong foundation for climate change education. We provide all early kindergarten to grade 12 students with a modern curriculum that follows best practices from Canada and the world and incorporates a Yukon context and Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being.

The concept-based and competency-driven curriculum allows for students to access deeper understanding of the environmental challenges facing our world today, including climate change. Flexible learning environments that include space for incorporating local context and place-based learning opportunities are at the forefront of the current curriculum. Topics related to the environment and climate change are found in science curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12. Yukon also offers two locally developed courses, Climate Change 10 and Climate Change 12, for Yukon schools. These courses were co-developed by Yukon teachers in collaboration with representatives from the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon University and were approved for use in Yukon schools.

The Yukon Climate Change 10 course outlines a broad range of processes that have accelerated the rate of climate change, the environmental impacts associated with these changes, mechanisms that may mitigate such impacts, and adaptations designed to cope with anticipated changes.

The course synopsis for Climate Change 12 states that climate change is the most complex and wide-reaching challenge facing humankind today. Reducing the impacts of climate change and moving Canada and the globe toward resiliency and adaptability for climate impacts will require substantial changes at all levels of Canadian and global societies. It is critical that Canadians understand climate change causes, impacts, and risks. An educated and proactive public, including youth, is essential to driving the required transformation.

Yukon Climate Change 12 is designed to provide students with a background permitting actions to address climate change. Both courses seek to include First Nation perspectives and specific actions of First Nations in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change, along with informing students of the Indigenous and Yukon First Nation experiences of climate change and to help them to learn how First Nations have adapted for millennia.

These courses have integrated Yukon First Nation perspectives and coincide with many aspects of the Yukon First Nation *Umbrella Final Agreement*, particularly chapter 11, Land Use Planning; chapter 14, Water Management; chapter 16, Fish and Wildlife; and chapter 17, Forest Resources.

Students learn about climate change from multiple perspectives, fostering a holistic understanding of causes,

impacts, and potential solutions. Here are some of the aspects that students typically learn in our curriculum regarding climate change. In science, students explore the scientific principles underlying climate change. They learn about the greenhouse effects, carbon cycles, and how human activities contribute to the changing climate. This includes understanding the role of fossil fuels, deforestation, and other human-induced factors in driving climate change, including waste.

In geography, climate change is studied in the context of geography, examining its global impact on ecosystems and weather patterns in different regions around the world. Students learn about the effects of climate change on landscapes, biodiversity, and natural resources. In social studies, climate change is approached through a social lens in focusing on societal impacts, including displacement of communities due to rising sea levels, the effects on Indigenous cultures, and the socio-economic challenges associated with climate-related disasters.

In environmental studies, the curriculum emphasizes the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. Students explore solutions to mitigate climate change, such as renewable energy sources, conservation efforts, waste reduction, and sustainable living practices. Critical thinking and problem solving — in this area, students are encouraged to think critically about climate change issues. They learn to analyze data, evaluate different perspectives, and develop informed opinions on topics related to climate science, environmental policies, and actions to address climate change, much like the topic that we are talking about today.

In personal and social development, the curriculum fosters a sense of personal responsibility and social awareness regarding climate change. Students are encouraged to take individual and collective action, understand their environmental footprint, and engage in activities that contribute to environmental conservation and sustainability.

Students have opportunities to study the environment and climate change in more detail through specialized science courses, such as Earth Science 11, Environmental Science 11, Science for Citizens 11, and Environmental Science 12. For example, in Science for Citizens 11, students learn about how climate change affects different parts of our world. In food production, for instance, they see how changing weather can make it hard for farmers to grow food. This helps them to understand the challenges that farmers face and why it is important to find ways to help.

In terms of plants and animals, they learn how climate change affects where plants and animals live. They might see how some animals move to new places or how plants struggle to survive in different conditions. By visiting coastal areas, students can see how rising sea levels and bad weather can damage homes and buildings.

This shows them why it is critical for communities to plan and protect themselves. Ocean problems are also looked at. Students explore how the ocean becomes more acidic because of climate change. They learn how this hurts sea creatures and the whole ocean ecosystem. In addition to this —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

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

*Debate on Motion No. 856 accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

**The following sessional papers were tabled November 22, 2023:**

35-1-135

*2022-2023 Annual Report Yukon Human Rights Commission and Yukon Human Rights Commission Financial Statements Year Ended March 31, 2023* (Speaker Harper)

35-1-136

*Yukon Public Accounts 2022-23* (Silver)

35-1-137

*Annual Report Yukon Housing Corporation For the year ended March 31, 2023* (Pillai)

35-1-138

*Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Annual Report 2022-2023* (McLean)

35-1-139

*Health Care Insurance Programs — Health Services — Fiscal Years 2013-14 to 2022-23 — Annual Report April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023* (McPhee)

35-1-140

*Annual Report 2022-23 Crime Prevention & Victim Services Trust Fund* (McPhee)

**The following legislative returns were tabled November 22, 2023:**

35-1-111

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. Clarke related to general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — committee recommendations (Pillai)

35-1-112

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. Clarke related to general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — community land trust (Pillai)

35-1-113

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Istchenko related to general debate on Vote 52, Environment, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — campground access roads (Clarke, N.)

35-1-114

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — Drury Creek rest stop (Clarke, N.)

35-1-115

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — third-party rental agreements (Clarke, N.)

35-1-116

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with MLA Tredger related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — sound barriers on Alaska Highway (Clarke, N.)

35-1-117

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Vote 55, Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 211, *Second Appropriation Act 2023-24* — brushing between Johnsons Crossing and Lone Tree Creek (Clarke, N.)

**The following documents were filed November 22, 2023:**

35-1-167

*Yukon Lottery Commission Annual Report 2022-23* (Silver)

35-1-168

Environmental contamination at Yukon landfills, letter re (dated November 10, 2023) from Martin Melendro, Executive Director, Yukon Conservation Society, and Lewis Rifkind, Mining Analyst, Yukon Conservation Society, to Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Services (Mostyn)