



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 243

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35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, April 9, 2025 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2025 Spring Sitting

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

### 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	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Wednesday, April 9, 2025 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.  
*Visitors introduced*

**Speaker:** Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Battle of Vimy Ridge

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, one of the most significant battles in Canadian history. On April 9, 1917, Easter Monday, thousands of Canadian soldiers climbed out of their trenches and advanced through mud, heavy shelling, and relentless enemy fire. Many of these soldiers were young men in their late teens and early twenties — anglophones, francophones, Indigenous folks, and new Canadians. These soldiers represented Canada from coast to coast to coast.

For four days, the Canadian corps, fighting together as a unified force for the first time, did what many thought was impossible. They captured Vimy Ridge, a German stronghold that had resisted Allied attacks in 1914 and 1915. This victory was no accident; it was won through careful planning, new tactics, and, most of all, the courage and determination of our soldiers, but the cost was heavy. Nearly 3,600 Canadians lost their lives and 7,000 were wounded. Among them were several Yukoners, including Lieutenant Howard Grestock and Private William Hayhurst. The Yukon Motor Machine Gun Battery, funded by Joe Boyle and manned by Dawson volunteers, provided vital support. Another Yukoner, Herbert Lawless, a prospector who enlisted in 1914, was killed in action on April 11. He now rests in the Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery in France.

The sacrifice of these soldiers saw a military victory and helped to shape Canada's national identity. Their bravery showed the world that Canada was more than just part of the British Empire. We were a nation united, resilient, and determined to build a better future.

This battle shaped our heritage in a profound way. It helped forge a collective Canadian consciousness, a recognition that, despite our vast geography and diverse origins, we are stronger when we stand together.

The legacy of Vimy lives on not only in the towering white memorial that rises over the ridge in France but in our schools,

our communities, and our national memory. It lives on in the way that we honour our veterans, in the peace we uphold, and in the pride that we feel for our country's contributions to global peace and security.

Today as we remember this battle, I encourage all Yukoners to take a moment to reflect on the heroism and sacrifices of those who fought at Vimy Ridge. To honour their memory, the flags of the Government of Yukon Jim Smith Building will be flown at half mast today.

This courage continues to inspire, reminding us of the price of peace and the duty we all share in protecting the values that they fought for.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, comrades, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place on April 9, 1917.

The French and the British armies had failed to take Vimy Ridge from the Germans in World War I, costing thousands of lives. Easter morning, attacking together for the first time, the four Canadian divisions — more than 15,000 infantry — stormed the ridge at 5:30 a.m. where heavy artillery bombardment was brought down on the German forces.

Elaborate preparations took place in the two months leading up to the battle under the command of Arthur Currie, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division. He and other leaders ensured that the Canadian soldiers knew the terrain just as well as the Germans.

There were countless acts of sacrifice and bravery throughout the battle, which lasted four days. 3,598 Canadians lost their lives and over 7,000 were injured. Vimy became a symbol for the sacrifice of the young dominion.

In the words of Brigadier General A.E. Ross at the time of the battle — and I'll quote: "... in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation."

In 1922, the French government ceded to Canada in perpetuity Vimy Ridge and the land surrounding it. The white marble and haunting sculptures of the Vimy memorial, unveiled in 1936, stand as a reminder of the 11,285 Canadian soldiers killed in France who have no known graves.

I want to thank the French for taking care of those graves still today and for taking care of the Vimy memorial. It's as pristine as the day it was built.

I was fortunate to stand before this great monument and can attest to just how incredible it is, having been there for a Remembrance Day parade in 1988 as a young Canadian soldier. Many consider the Canadian victory at Vimy as a defining moment for Canada when the country emerged from under the shadow of Britain and felt capable of greatness.

Canadian troops earned the reputation as formidable, effective troops because of their bravery and success. Heroes like Sir Julian Byng, Sir Arthur Currie, and those who earned the Victoria Cross, including Private William Milne and Captain Thain MacDowell, exemplify the courage and sacrifice of the Canadian soldiers.

Today, we remember their bravery and sacrifice and we remember those who fought to protect their freedom. In the words of my fellow comrade, a friend of mine, John Dunn — he's retired. I served with him back in 1988. He put on his Facebook post this morning a picture of the memorial and it said: "9<sup>th</sup> of April, 1917, the day Canada became a country."

Lest we forget.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the brave Canadians who fought the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

It is said that Canada came of age as a country on those hard April days in 1917, but this coming of age wasn't an easy one. At 5:30 a.m. on April 9, 1917, through the wind-driven snow and sleet, the first wave of nearly 20,000 Canadian soldiers advanced into the face of deadly machine-gun fire. The Battle of Vimy Ridge proved to be a great success, but it came at a heavy cost. Of the some 100,000 Canadians who served there, there were over 10,000 casualties, nearly 3,600 of which were fatal.

By the end of the First World War, Canada — a country of less than eight million people — would see more than 650,000 men and women serve in uniform. That conflict took a huge toll, with more than 66,000 of those losing their lives, with over 170,000 being wounded.

It has been said already that our experience of World War I, in particular the unity and selfless heroism of Canadians at Vimy Ridge, was a watershed moment in the development of our country. At Vimy Ridge, regiments from coast to coast saw action together in a distinctly Canadian triumph, helping to create a new and stronger sense of a national identity in our country. Canada's military achievements during the war raised our international stature and helped earn us a separate signature on the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended the war.

Each year on this day, people gather at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France to remember. This noble monument bears the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers who are listed as missing and presumed dead in France during the First World War. It stands as a tribute to all who served our country in conflict and paid a price to help to ensure the peace and freedom that we enjoy today.

On the anniversary of Vimy Ridge, remember the men and women who paid the ultimate price for freedom, the children who would grow up never knowing their fathers, the parents mourning the loss of sons, and the sisters who would never again see their brothers. On this day, we recognize the bravery and the horror, the achievement and the loss in such a brief moment on this very day.

Lest we forget.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of International Day of Pink**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to International Day of Pink. It is an opportunity for people around the world to join and take action against the bullying and discrimination that

people of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community face. At its heart, today is a day about choosing love and acceptance over hate, division, fear, and discrimination.

This year's theme is "Re-Emergence". Re-emergence is about honouring 2SLGBTQIA+ activists and allies who have fought and continue to fight for safer and more inclusive communities. As part of this year's Re-Emergence theme, we encourage Yukoners to learn about and celebrate significant milestones in Canada's history — milestones that were achieved through the determination and courage of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the face of systemic homophobia and transphobia and milestones that have transformed Canadian society for the better.

We recognize and honour Michelle Douglas, who in 1990 launched a landmark legal challenge against the Canadian military, which had discharged her for being a lesbian. Douglas' case was part of the LGBT Purge, the Canadian government's mass effort from the 1950s to the 1990s to identify and remove queer people from Canada's military, RCMP, and civil service, not unlike what we are seeing in the United States even now.

We recognize activists Martine Roy, Todd Ross, and Alida Satalic, who led the 2016 LGBT Purge class action lawsuit that brought justice for hundreds of purged survivors. We also recognize and celebrate the milestones that Canada's two-spirit community has helped to achieve. We recognize and thank many Yukon activists who have fought for and helped achieve change here in our territory to legalize same-sex marriage, to fight for changes to our *Human Rights Act* to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and expression, to ban conversion therapy in our territory, and to advocate for the proclamation of Two-Spirit Day, and so many more.

On this International Day of Pink, we hold our hands up to the activists and advocates across Canada and the Yukon who stand up to inequity and inequality, and we confirm our unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion in the Yukon. And we hold our hands up to the two teenagers, David Shepherd and Travis Price, who saw a new student at their small high school in Berwick, Nova Scotia being bullied for wearing a pink shirt back in 2007.

They wanted to take a stand against bullying, especially homophobia and transphobia, so they bought 50 pink shirts and encouraged their classmates to wear them the next day. There was overwhelming support, and the actions of these two young men sparked an international movement, reminding us the actions of one or two people can always make a difference.

*Applause*

**Ms. Clarke:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the International Day of Pink observed each year on the second Wednesday of April. The Day of Pink aims to raise awareness about anti-LGBTQ2S+ bullying and discrimination. It is an opportunity to spark conversations in classrooms around the harms of bullying and the power of solidarity and the importance of standing up for others.

In 2007, classmates bullied a ninth-grade student in Nova Scotia for wearing pink. This act was witnessed by two 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, who reacted by buying and distributing 50 pink shirts to wear in solidarity. A clear message was sent that bullying would not be tolerated and pink became a symbol of solidarity against bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

This year's theme marks two anniversaries: the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the word "two-spirit" and the end of what was known as the LGBT Purge, the long-standing discrimination and purging of LGBTQ2S+ individuals in the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, and federal public service. The theme is "Re-Emergence" and honours those who paved the way to inclusion and diversity — people like Michelle Douglas, a former officer with the special investigation unit who, in 1990, launched a successful lawsuit against the military which had discharged her from the service for being a lesbian.

We wear pink today in solidarity with all those who have been discriminated against in the past to show that discrimination has no place in our future.

Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to recognize International Day of Pink. Wearing pink today is a commitment to allyship. It shows that we stand together to celebrate diversity and take a stand against discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, and transmisogyny. Often, it's a small act of resistance that starts a revolution and that's exactly how International Day of Pink was born.

With everything that is happening in the world around us right now, taking a stand against discrimination is even more important. That means being an active ally. It means that we cannot stand silently by and pretend that things are getting better. Each of us must have the courage to stand up against hate. All it takes is one person to stand up for what they think is right to create a tidal wave of support. A revolution of kindness starts when we have the courage to resist hate. Whether it's in the Yukon, Canada, or beyond, we need to stand together against hateful beliefs. We need to keep the clock from turning backwards on efforts toward establishing equality for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

International Day of Pink has one purpose: to create a more inclusive and diverse world. We do this by encouraging people to challenge social norms and stand up against bullying toward their 2SLGBTQIA+ peers. We must also stand with them to make sure that they are seen, acknowledged, respected, and heard.

Today is a day to stand tall, to stand together, and to embrace people's true selves. Let today and every day be a chance to speak out to support one another and to build communities rooted in respect and love, because every person deserves to feel seen, heard, valued, and to be included.

Mahsi' cho.

*Applause*

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

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House encourages Yukoners to be respectful and welcoming toward our American neighbours and tourists visiting the territory in recognition of the importance and long-standing relationship and contributions to our territory.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports government investments into community energy infrastructure and congratulates the Kluane First Nation on their sixth diesel-free day in the communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay with the operation of the wind turbine, their new wind/battery backup system.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to:

- (1) impose a two-way arms embargo on Israel;
- (2) end Canadian involvement in illegal Israeli settlements;
- (3) address anti-Palestinian racism and protect freedom of expression on Palestine;
- (4) recognize the State of Palestine; and
- (5) properly fund relief efforts in Gaza, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

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

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Energy strategy

**Mr. Dixon:** Yesterday, the Yukon Energy Corporation released their new energy strategy for the next 25 years. The plan calls for a massive investment in new diesel generation to meet the growing demand for dependable power for the foreseeable future. The plans tabled by the minister yesterday are nothing short of a complete and utter repudiation of the last nine years of Liberal government. They represent an undeniable admission of failure from this Liberal government. Put simply, the Liberals' energy strategy has been an abject failure and these plans could not make that more clear.

My question is for the Premier: Does he acknowledge that these plans are a clear admission that the last nine years have been a complete failure for our energy system?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, if all the members opposite took away from that is that there are diesel plants being built, then they haven't read the full report. It talks about investing in our existing hydro facilities; it talks about building wind/battery backup. Of course, it talks about having thermal. We have always said that we are going to need thermal here.

The question about whether it is a permanent plant or rented diesels — that is just a technical question, and I am

happy if the one that comes forward is the recommendation of Yukon Energy, and this is exactly what's come forward.

Over the past years, the members opposite have said: Hey, we don't even see what the plan is.

Here is the plan, and the part that they are focusing on is the part about making sure that we have capacity in the immediate term and build toward renewables. Do they support renewables — yes or no? They said so during the last election, but then even yesterday, the Member for Kluane was saying: Hey, maybe we should reduce our transition toward this energy future.

So, just let Yukoners know: Do you support renewables — yes or no?

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, over the last nine years, the Liberals have focused on three things: (1) they have deliberately increased demand for electricity by pushing electric heat, electric vehicles, and electrification across the board; (2) they have failed to increase supply — every single one of their energy projects that would bring on dependable generation capacity has failed, stalled, or is dead in the water; and (3) they swore up and down until they were practically blue in the face that they would never invest in diesel generation. That is how we got here, Mr. Speaker.

This set of plans by the Energy Corporation can be interpreted as nothing other than a complete admission that the Liberals' energy strategy has failed. Will the Liberals finally admit that their energy strategy has been a complete and utter failure and that it will be ratepayers who are forced to pay for this failure?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** You know what, Mr. Speaker? If the Yukon Party build a diesel plant or the Yukon Liberals build a diesel plant, it still costs the same. In fact, that doesn't change the cost of it — which political party is in power. The difference is that the Yukon Party would like to stick with diesels. That is the future for them. That is not our future. I don't think that is the future of us as a government, I don't think that is the future of Yukoners, and I don't think that is the future of Yukon Energy.

By the way, we have invited them to come in as witnesses today, so the members opposite can ask them directly. They know that.

That plan talks about using those diesels to move toward things like wind/battery backup, which we just talked about today with Kluane and how they are doing that as a project. So, we have wind turbines up on Haeckel Hill, we have a battery plant coming on right now, and that is what our future is for energy. We are working with communities around the territory for new renewables. We will keep doing that.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, the plans issued by the Energy Corporation this week should be a wake-up call. Over the past nine years, the Liberal government has ignored the fundamentals of our energy system. They have failed to invest in our existing grid, they have failed to bring on a single new project that would provide dependable generation capacity, and they have left our system in tatters. Despite all their rhetoric, all their promises, and all their disingenuous targets, the Liberals are leaving a legacy of failure when it comes to our energy

system. The sad part about all of this is that it will be ratepayers who will pick up the tab for this failure.

So, does the Premier recognize that, after nine years of Liberal government, our energy system is more unreliable, more unaffordable, and more insecure than when they came to power?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest rates in the north. Our rates for electricity here are comparable to Alberta's. Why is that? That is because, decades ago, Yukoners invested in hydro here in the territory. Now, I know that the members opposite went for next gen and I know that it went nowhere.

We just had a conference here — in the last two weeks, I think — called "Renewables in Remote Communities" where we talked about all the work across Canada, and they chose yet again to host that national conference here in the Yukon because of all of the work that is happening here with our communities for new renewable projects. It is because we start with the community. We asked that First Nation: What would you like to go forward with in terms of renewable energy? That is the future.

We will need, as an islanded grid here, to have thermal backup — that means diesel — and, for sure, I have never shied away from that. I will go find all the references that I have made in this House about that.

The future for the Yukon Party is to just use diesels into the future. That will not help us. It is to have that ability when we need it to have a reliable, affordable, sustainable system. We are going to continue to invest in renewables here in the territory.

#### Question re: Diesel energy generation

**Mr. Kent:** If there has been one constant over the Liberals' time in office, it has been their insistence that they would never invest in fossil-fuel generation capacity. Here is just one example from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources back in 2021 — and I'll quote: "Diesel is a fossil fuel; these are fossil fuels. We need to move off of fossil fuels. No, we don't want to build another plant. Yes, we are renting diesels because it won't commit us to them for the long term. That is great; that is smart."

He then went on to add: "So, it's a mistake to build a fossil fuel plant. I will keep saying it. I am happy to rise and keep saying it." The plan he tabled yesterday shows that we will not only be renting diesels but building new diesel plants and relying on them heavily into the 2030s and beyond.

Does the minister still think that building fossil-fuel plants is a mistake?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Do I still think that we should move away from fossil fuels? You bet — absolutely. Over the period of time that I've been in here, I have said that we will need fossil fuels as a backup and that, if we have a capacity gap, we can look for them and that we should take the smartest choice about which way to go, whether it is a rented diesel or whether it is a purchased diesel. I have always said to the members opposite when we are in Committee of the Whole that the diesels themselves don't know whether they are rented or

owned. The difference is whether it's a smart choice for the long term.

I said that I would listen to Yukon Energy Corporation and what they recommend. They are recommending to go for owned diesels. We can all hear from Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation today. The reason that I say that is because they believe that our pathway for dependable winter energy is with things like wind/battery backup. When you have wind/battery backup, you have more dependence on the times when you don't have wind or battery. You have to build the diesels, but you want to use them as little as possible.

The difference that I believe exists is that the members opposite would see us heavily reliant on those for the future of our energy. I think that what we should have is diesels only to support getting toward renewables for the long term.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, back in 2021, the minister said that it's a mistake to build a fossil-fuel plant, but he won't answer today if he still believes that building that plant is a mistake given the report here tabled yesterday.

Another famous quote from the Liberals was when the Premier announced the politically motivated cancellation of the much-needed 20-megawatt thermal plant back in 2019. During public consultation that year, the Energy Corporation made the case that a thermal plant would be an affordable and reliable way to meet the territory's growing demand for power. Despite the millions spent on the project, the Liberals cancelled those plans, and the Premier announced — quote: "This is good news for Yukoners..."

A week later, the Premier announced that they would be relying on renting diesels and that — quote: "We believe it's a good investment..."

Now, six years later, we're right back here again, only now we'll be spending over \$100 million on not one but two new diesel plants. So, does the Premier still stand by those comments?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** You know, Mr. Speaker, what we did that time was we asked Yukoners: Which direction should we go? And what they said was: Not on that path. I seem to recall that the Member for Lake Laberge also said no to that plant; I'll check on that.

But one of the points that I want to make for all of us as Yukoners — we have a vision for renewable energy here in the territory. I am so proud of the decisions that we've made in the past as a territory, as the Yukon. What I say to the members opposite is that the Yukon Party put forward a platform where they said: Yes, we support *Our Clean Future*. But, no, nothing that they have said in this House has supported anything like that. If their end goal is just to build a diesel plant — not good enough.

What I see in those documents that I tabled yesterday — yes, it starts with a diesel plant, but it's so much more. Have a read. I encourage the members opposite to have a read. I encourage them to ask the witnesses when they come in today. So, we'll really hear what they think then.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, let's move to some more recent comments from the minister. In the last Sitting, just a few

months ago, here's what he said — and I'll quote: "Now, what the members opposite, what they wish to do — sorry, the Yukon Party wishes to do is to just build a big diesel plant. I know that they had arguments about where it should go. I am not sure that they ever landed with that. I heard yesterday from the Leader of the Official Opposition that he believes that it should be in Whitehorse."

Then the minister went on to say — and I'll quote again: "... the members opposite's commitment is to build a diesel plant, but that will take us backward in addressing the issues of climate change."

Mr. Speaker, does the minister still stand by his comments from just last fall given his announcement yesterday of two new diesel plants in Whitehorse?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do stand by my comments. My comment was: "just" build a diesel plant. I think that the opposition just wants to build a diesel plant, meaning that's it — or diesel plants — plural. In fact, when they stood up today, the Leader of the Official Opposition — the Member for Copperbelt North — talked about the plans of Yukon Energy and only focused on that — as if it's the only thing within that plan. That's what makes me think that is all that they are focusing on, and that's not enough for Yukoners.

Yes, we will need diesel. I can remember meeting with Yukoners concerned — back before I was ever elected to this House — and they were surprised to hear me say that we need diesel. And I said: Yes, we do, because we have an islanded grid, and we will need it, but we need to do more than that; we do need to transition off fossil fuels. It is the way in which we will break our dependency on a polluting type of energy, and in the long run, it will be cheaper, because — we have the lowest rates in the north today because of the hard decisions that our predecessors made around building these hydro facilities. I thank them for those hard choices, and I say to the members opposite: No, it's not enough just to build a diesel plant.

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

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Yukon NDP asked several questions about access to emergency services in rural areas. In response, the minister made a comment about individuals choosing to live in hard-to-reach places. Folks in rural Yukon bristled. A statement like that shifts the blame away from government responsibility; it justifies unequal access to essential health care, erases cultural and historic connections to the land, especially for Indigenous communities, and it dismisses the systemic obligation to provide equitable services to all Yukoners, regardless of where they live.

The fact is that Dawson City, like many communities in the Yukon, is facing a housing shortage. If people weren't choosing to live in West Dawson and Sunnyside, then they wouldn't be able to live in Dawson at all. So, is there anything that the minister would like to add to her previous response about equitable access to EMS services in rural areas?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I will take the opportunity to thank the emergency measures and medical services teams, the air ambulance teams, the ambulance teams who respond, and most particularly, the individuals who are

community responders who take time from their precious personal time, who volunteer in their communities, who make their communities more safe for the individuals who live there and their neighbours and their colleagues, and all of those Emergency Medical Services personnel should be recognized by us for the very difficult job that we ask them to do and for the very difficult job that they do every day for Yukoners.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, there has been lots of talk about the importance of building lots being made available in communities like Haines Junction and Watson Lake, and we agree. Lot development in rural Yukon is critical. Dawson, like every other rural community, is struggling with a shortage of workers, and even if people have an interest in putting down roots, they are unable to do so due to the housing shortage.

We know that this government has prioritized mining in the municipal boundary, but what we haven't heard is what's next when it comes to new residential lots in the Dawson area.

What is this government's plan to develop residential lots in Dawson City to accommodate the growing demand for housing?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I again appreciate the opportunity to stand and talk about all the great work that Community Services staff and the EMR staff are doing to create new lots for Yukoners across the territory. This government, in 2016 when we were elected, campaigned on a slogan that was "All communities matter", and that still stands with us today. We're doing the good work of building infrastructure and housing across the territory.

The member opposite is talking about Dawson City and what we're doing there. We have Dredge Pond II, 40 lots; the YESAB submission has been made; regulatory approvals and detail design are advancing to tender later this year, or perhaps in early 2026, depending on when that YESAB happens. That's 40 new lots in the Dredge Pond II development. There's also feasibility and/or planning underway or targeted for Callison east industrial infill area and various infill lots in 2025-26.

Again, like many other rural municipalities in the Yukon, we are also concentrating on Dawson. It has certainly been a priority for the MLA for the area. We're doing all the good work we can to make sure that those lots are brought on stream with the municipality of Dawson.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, people living in West Dawson and Sunnyside have extremely limited access to clean, safe water. Many people rely on refilling blue jugs for drinking water. That's a problem when the Yukon River is going through breakup or freeze-up because, as we all know, there's no way to cross the river to find safe water to fill those blue jugs. Breakup and freeze-up can take at least four months, and sometimes residents are isolated for up to seven months. That's a long time to go without access to safe drinking water.

The only year-round access to water is through private property on Sweet Creek, and the West Dawson and Sunnyside local area plan that was developed in 2013 when there were only 50 people living there — and even back then, the need for a community well was identified. Now there are hundreds of people and there's still no year-round access to potable water.

When will this government finally act and provide year-round access to water for residents of West Dawson and Sunnyside?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** What I can say this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is that this government has invested heavily in every single municipality and small community across the territory in improving rural infrastructure, including sewer and water. We have done so by dealing with and consulting with municipalities about what their priorities are. We took direction from those municipalities and acted on the priorities that we were given by those municipalities. We will continue to do that into the future.

We are now sitting in another moment in history for this country. We have heard the current Prime Minister talk about the need for new infrastructure spending across the country to deal with the financial crisis brought on by the erratic behaviour by the folks in Washington. We are looking forward to seeing what that looks like, and when we do, we will certainly talk to the municipalities and let them determine the priorities that they see for us in delivering infrastructure for their municipalities.

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

**Ms. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, according to the new energy strategy tabled by the minister responsible for the Yukon Energy Corporation yesterday, they intend to spend more than \$500 million over the next five years on Yukon's electricity system. This work is needed because of how little attention the Liberal government has paid to the fundamentals of our system over the past nine years.

Many Yukoners will want to know what this means for them. None of the projects listed in this new plan appear in the Liberals' five-year capital plan, which suggests that many of these will be paid for by ratepayers.

How much of the \$500 million that will be spent over the next five years will be paid for by Yukoners' electricity rates?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, for Yukoners, today we have the president of Yukon Energy and the president of Yukon Development Corporation here as witnesses. The members opposite know that. Yukoners don't know that yet or maybe they see it on the Order Paper — I'm not sure — but they will be here to answer those questions.

What I want to mention for the member opposite is that I saw the members' platform last time and what they said was: We will just not put the charges that are coming to Yukon Energy to rates. They told Yukoners that what they would do is just push that off. The sad thing about that is that what happens then is that your system gets way out of whack.

Our perspective is that we should go to rates regularly and make sure that the cost of providing electricity is brought to the ratepayer. We have the lowest rates in the north and that is because of the strong investments in the past. There is still lots of work in front of us about what will happen with that investment into our energy infrastructure coming forward.

But as an example, the battery system that is just being commissioned right now is about half from infrastructure dollars and about half that will go to rates. So, we'll see as the



projects come forward, and we'll have that dialogue with Yukon Energy and then bring it through our budget bills here to the House.

**Ms. Clarke:** According to the Liberals' new energy strategy, the Energy Corporation will begin constructing a new thermal power plant next year and a second in the following year. In total, they are planning to spend more than \$100 million on these new fossil-fuel-powered generators in Whitehorse.

For residents who rely on electric heat, they're interested to know when and how this will affect their rates. How much will power bills increase to pay for this work?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I'm having a tough time following the Yukon Party. They want a diesel plant; now it sounds like they don't want a diesel plant. Maybe what they didn't understand is that it would cost money to build a diesel plant. Yes, it does cost money to build a diesel plant. All energy infrastructure has a cost to it.

I'm happy to get up all day and answer these questions. But I just say to the members opposite: Feel free to let me know whether you support renewable energies, whether you support building this diesel plant — yes or no — and really whether they believe that the future is fossil fuels, because, by the way, those prices are changing too.

#### **Question re: Energy capital project commitments**

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, the Liberals have banked on a number of projects that have either stalled, gone way overbudget, or been cancelled altogether. The Liberals even announced an investment of \$50 million by Yukon taxpayers into the Atlin hydro project. It was notable that the Atlin hydro project isn't even mentioned in Yukon Energy's plan for the next 25 years.

Last year, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources claimed that they were still committed to investing \$50 million in that project. Can he tell us why it isn't even mentioned in the 25-year energy strategy?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, the reason the Atlin project isn't in there is because the Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership hasn't been able to close the funding gap, but we do meet with them fairly regularly. They are continuing to see if they can close that funding gap and we continue to show support for it.

If that project goes ahead, then it would be cheap energy at that \$50 million on the Yukoners' side. Of course, the overall price tag of the project is very high.

But what I will say again is that, just in the last years when Yukon Energy was in here, the members opposite said: They don't have a plan; they don't have a plan.

Of course, I said at that time that Yukon Energy Corporation is working on developing a new plan. Here it is. They have the new plan. They are coming in here to act as witnesses, and actually, that plan does map out a pathway to the future. It doesn't count on Atlin, but it does have a pathway for us as a territory to have a renewable, reliable, affordable grid and it will take investment — yes. Our energy infrastructure will require us to invest in it.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, in the Liberals' 10-year renewable energy strategy that was released in 2020, there was a heavy reliance on the development of the Moon Lake hydro project, which was originally supposed to come online in 2028. The last we heard, it was delayed until 2030. In the new Liberal energy strategy tabled yesterday, we notice that there is no mention of this project at all.

Why is the most significant project from the Liberals' former strategy being dropped?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am pretty sure that I've talked about this in the Assembly; I will look back and see how the dialogue went.

But to update Yukoners, the nation where Moon Lake is — the Carcross/Tagish First Nation came to us and said that they want to prioritize other things ahead of energy buildout. Their focus is on land use planning. That is their priority and they asked us to not move forward with those plans.

What is in our budget right now under the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative is work with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council about investigations into pump storage, so we are working with those First Nations that are ready to move forward. What I just said in my earlier answers is that we will continue to work with nations on the projects that they think are right for their traditional territories and under economic reconciliation with them. We think that it is right to work with our nations and our communities and we will take their lead.

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

**Mr. Cathers:** On Monday, the Premier tried to challenge my colleague when she pointed out what was obvious to everyone in the surrounding neighbourhood — that the emergency shelter has become a hub of criminal and inappropriate behaviour. The Premier said: "I do want to challenge the member opposite, because the question said that the shelter is a hub for criminal activity."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Premier is completely out of touch with what is going on at the shelter. Everyone in the neighbourhood is aware that there is significant criminal activity in the area. Property crime, vandalism, public drinking, drug use, and a wide range of other criminal activities are prevalent in the area. There has been drug trafficking, overdoses, and multiple deaths involving shelter clients and guests.

Does the Premier still want to challenge the fact that the shelter has become a hub of criminal activity?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the caution that has been made both by the Premier — although I won't speak for him — and by me in several comments is that we should be careful about drawing the connection between criminal activity in downtown and the services and the individuals who go to 405 Alexander for the purposes of having sometimes life-saving services presented to them there — health care, food, accommodation, safety.

There is, of course, a focus, unfortunately, by the criminal element on trying to victimize the individuals who are often having shelter services, having time spent at 405 Alexander. I

believe that the caution clearly is that those individuals should not be blamed for the criminal activity that is being referred to by the member opposite. It is an important understanding that we have of the activity and the victimization that is attempted by the criminal element — by criminals — in and around downtown Whitehorse and that, of course, needs to be addressed with root causes, increased funding to the RCMP, increased downtown safety plans, et cetera.

**Mr. Cathers:** Yesterday, the Minister of Health and Social Services expressed shock when my colleague noted that since the Liberals took over in 2019, the shelter was more permissive of drug and alcohol use. She said — quote: “In no way is the shelter or the operations at 405 Alexander permissive of drug and alcohol use.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister could not be more wrong or out of touch. Since the Liberals took over the shelter, they changed the operational model to a low-barrier approach that has been just that — more permissive of clients consuming drugs and alcohol. Whether it’s stories told by clients, families of people who died in the shelter, or any of the numerous reports, it has become very clear that the prevalence of drugs and alcohol at and around the shelter is creating serious problems. How can this minister be so out of touch that she doesn’t even realize that this is an issue?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I am very well aware, as is all of our Cabinet team, of the issues that exist at 405 Alexander. We are very well aware of the individuals who we are trying to help through the programming at 405 Alexander despite the fact that it was placed in the centre of downtown by the members opposite, despite the fact that we inherited that location, despite the fact that the building was nearly finished when we came to government without a single penny of O&M operations and was sold to the Salvation Army for a single dollar.

It is not a process by which we had indicated authority for those decisions, and as a result, we have worked very hard since then to provide Yukoners and our community with the support that they need, that our vulnerable populations need on a 24/7 basis — supportive living units and a range of services that are provided at 405 Alexander. I went through those yesterday in a list. I know the Premier has as well. I’m happy to continue that conversation.

As a clarification, the member opposite, as I heard it, said — the Leader of the Yukon Party — that the operation at 405 was permissive of those kinds of activities, and it simply is not.

**Mr. Cathers:** Another one of the surprising comments from the Premier and minister this week has been their attempt to dismiss the impact of their decision to take the shelter over and that it has had on the surrounding area. Here’s a quote from a CBC article about this issue just yesterday: “Businesses in the area have previously spoken out about an increase in disruptive behaviour and property damage after the Yukon government took over the shelter from the Salvation Army in 2019 before handing over operations to Connective just more than three years later.”

The former owner of the property that the Liberals bought next to the shelter made that point as well — quote: “Oettli owned the business and property for 29 years and said that while things were fine when the Salvation Army operated the shelter, the situation has since deteriorated, which ultimately led him to approaching the government...”

Does the Liberal government recognize that the problems at the shelter and around it increased dramatically when they made the decision to take over operation of the shelter in 2019?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I think what we need to be clear about is that the existence of 405 Alexander Street — and the services that are provided there for our most vulnerable Yukoners — does, in fact, concentrate the services at that location. However, the members opposite fail to recognize that, in fact, with the previous operator, the Salvation Army, it was an extremely high-barrier location, and the individuals who are now being served at that location were literally living on the streets, were throughout the community, were along the waterfront here in Whitehorse, were not receiving the services, were not receiving attention and care, were not receiving food and shelter, and were not having the opportunity to make different choices in their lives and deal with their addictions and mental health issues.

We believe that the services that are provided at 405 Alexander do, in fact, provide all of those things for our most vulnerable Yukoners.

We believe that this is the kind of care that they deserve, and we believe that is the work that we are doing at 405 Alexander.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

### Motion re appearance of witnesses

#### Committee of the Whole Motion No. 20

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, Douglas Janzen, chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Rod Savoie, chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, Gary Gazankas, president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation, and Chris Milner, president

and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operations of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

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

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, Douglas Janzen, chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Rod Savoie, chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation Board of Directors, Gary Gazankas, president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation, and Chris Milner, president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operations of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

*Motion agreed to*

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

#### **Bill No. 47: Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm pleased to rise today to begin the Committee of the Whole debate on Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce a familiar face to the Committee. With me today, we have Clarke LaPrairie — with his best socks on — the Assistant Deputy Minister of Economics, Fiscal Policy and Statistics. He's here to assist me with Committee discussions today as the resident expert on all things tax.

I appreciate the discussion from members in the Assembly during second reading, and today, I will be expanding on some of my own remarks from that reading of the bill.

So, Bill No. 47 — where it is a very brief bill — only five pages — my intention today is to walk Committee through the legislation in the order in which it was written and expand a bit. So, I'll begin with section 2 of the bill, Madam Chair, which amends section 6(38) and section 6(50) of the Yukon *Income Tax Act*. These changes adjust the Yukon minimum tax in response to recent federal amendments.

So, the alternative minimum tax, or AMT, ensures that high-income earners who may reduce their taxes through deductions and credits will still pay a minimum level of tax. As

the name suggests, the AMT is an alternative to the regular progressive tax system. Now I'll briefly explain how the AMT works, the federal changes, and why they require this technical amendment today.

So, when calculating your tax, you typically determine total income from employment, pensions, investments, and other sources. You then subtract deductions to get a taxable income. You apply progressive tax rates and then use the tax credits to calculate the final amount owed. With AMT, the process changes.

Now what you do is you start with total income. Some deductions are denied fully or partially from there. So, for example, normally, only 50 percent of the capital gains are taxed, but under the AMT, 100 percent is included. So then, applying AMT exemption — and this year the federal government increased that to about \$173,000. You then apply a flat AMT rate.

The recent federal changes mean that fewer Canadians will pay the AMT, but the highest earners will pay more. So, now let's discuss how this affects the Yukon system. That's all federal.

So, starting in 2024, the federal government changed the AMT to use the second tax bracket instead of the first. In the Yukon, the first tax bracket is 6.4 percent and the second is 9.0 percent; however, due to the current formula, the AMT rate is incorrectly calculated using 8.75 percent — so, offering high-income earners that 0.25 percent of a tax break. So, this bill fixes that issue by tying the calculation of Yukon's AMT rate to Yukon's actual second tax rate, which is that 9.0 percent. So, a small little calculation: If you want to calculate the AMT looking at both of these rates — federally and locally — the Yukon's second income tax bracket rate is divided by the federal second income tax bracket — so, that would be the 0.09 — and would then be divided by the 20.5 — I believe is the second bracket from the feds — and then from that calculation, the result would be an AMT of 43.9 percent.

So, that is what we're doing — is correcting that calculation to make sure that we're using the 9.0 instead of the 8.75. This correction ensures fairness, and it matches up with the federal rules.

Madam Chair, I will move on to section 3 of the bill, which is the main part of the legislation. This section adds section 7.01 to the *Income Tax Act*, introducing the fertility and surrogacy tax credit.

I will first discuss paragraph 4 — sorry; paragraph 7.01(2), which describes the credit, before returning to 7.01(1), which outlines the eligibility criteria. The phrase — and I quote: "... deemed to have paid, at the end of the taxation year, on account of tax payable..." confirms that this is a refundable tax credit. This means that the amount received is not based upon income level; it's a credit. The credit covers up to 40 percent of eligible expenses, with a maximum of \$10,000 per year. Since 40 percent of eligible expenses are covered, the maximum amount is reached if \$25,000 is spent — roughly the cost of two in vitro fertilization procedures.

Now, unlike some other jurisdictions, this credit is available to each taxpayer rather than being limited to a single

household or patient. This means that a family of two can share treatment costs, with each person claiming their respective share, allowing for up to \$20,000 per household in tax credits. Notably, this subsection does not impose a lifetime cap on the number of years that the credit can be claimed, nor does it exclude procedures for reversing elective sterilization, which differs in some other jurisdictions.

Madam Chair, I will return to section 7.01(1), which sets out the criteria to qualify for this credit. First, the person claiming this credit or the patient, if different, must be a Yukon resident with Yukon health care coverage on the last day of the year or at the time of their death. This subsection also specifies what expenses are eligible. Simply put, the credit covers fertility- and surrogacy-related expenses, including sperm and ova acquisition costs, as long as they are already eligible under the existing federal and territorial non-refundable medical expenses tax credit. That credit currently covers up to 21.4 percent of treatment costs for Yukoners. The new refundable tax credit essentially builds on this support by adding an extra benefit.

Since travel for medical treatment is already an eligible expense under the medical expenses tax credit, it will also be covered under this new fertility and surrogacy tax credit; however, there is an exemption for those claiming the northern residents deduction. Under those rules, Yukoners can claim extra trips for medical services, including fertility treatments. If they claim these trips under the northern residents deduction, they cannot claim them under the medical expenses tax credit, which is just fair. The same rules apply to the fertility and surrogacy tax credit. Travel costs cannot be claimed if they have already been deducted under the northern residents deduction, so no double-dipping is a good way of putting it, I guess. This is addressed in paragraph 7.01(1)(e), which excludes expenses claimed under section 110.4 of the federal act.

That concludes my technical explanation of section 3 of Bill No. 47. I would also like to highlight a few key points made during the second reading. At a maximum value of \$10,000 per person, we anticipate this credit to translate into approximately \$300,000 per year in government support. In the first year, we anticipate costs will be higher due to retroactive claims. I would also like to emphasize that assisted reproductive technologies are effective and continue to improve.

I would like to move on to section 4 of Bill No. 47, which is very short. This section amends section 9(5) of the *Income Tax Act*, which is related to the Yukon child benefit program.

The Yukon child benefit is a non-taxable benefit paid to help low- and modest-income families with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age. In 2024 and 2025, families received up to \$76.50 per month for each child. Yukon child benefits payments are combined with the Canada child benefit. In budget 2024, the federal government extended the time period from one month to six months that the Canada child benefit would continue to be paid after the unfortunate situation of the death of a child. We are fully supportive of this compassionate change and will make parallel changes to the Yukon child benefit through these minor changes in this bill.

Our final change to the *Income Tax Act* is found in section 5 of Bill No. 47. So, Madam Chair, this is a minor technical change to a definition found in section 16 of the *Yukon Government Carbon Price Rebate Implementation Act* for mining businesses' carbon rebate. You may recall that, in 2022, the Yukon was required to change its previous mining rebate to a new mining rebate mirroring the general business rebate. The definition of "cross-border transportation equipment" was not updated at that time to include mining assets. Cross-border transportation equipment is equipment that spends a significant amount of time outside of the Yukon — you can think of transport trucks as an example. Some transportation equipment owned by Yukon businesses would not qualify for the Yukon rebate based on the proportion of time the asset spends outside of the Yukon. However, businesses can elect to have these assets considered cross-border transportation equipment.

By making this election, the business rebate is pro-rated by the proportion of time the equipment spends in the Yukon compared to Outside. We are actually not aware of any current mining cross-border transportation equipment; however, this minor amendment ensures the consistency between the general business rate and the mining business rate in the event that a mine owns cross-border transportation equipment.

As exciting as cross-border transportation equipment is, I would like to end my remarks here, and I'll do that here by first thanking Assistant Deputy Minister LaPrairie for his assistance here today and in the preparation for today.

Additionally, I would like to say how happy I am to be delivering on our commitment to making fertility treatments more affordable for Yukoners.

**Mr. Cathers:** Madam Chair, the Finance minister had shared some more comments earlier as well. We did appreciate the opportunity to attend the briefing and have officials, including Mr. LaPrairie, walk us through the details of this. I don't have any further questions at this point and will turn the floor over to the Third Party.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for the very thorough opening remarks, understanding, of course, that they came from the very capable support that he has in the Assembly.

I have a couple of questions about the fertility tax credit and just things that have been put to us. Is it possible to confirm which fertility treatments will be eligible? Specifically, will the cost, for example, of prescription medications that are required for the treatments be eligible? Is it the full spectrum of what is required for fertility, including medication? Will that be covered?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I guess that the easiest way of explaining this is that we are not really creating any new areas; we are just kind of expanding upon ones that already exist. Yukoners already can claim fertility treatments for both the existing federal and territorial medical expense tax credits. This can reduce their bill by upward of 21.4 percent of that cost, as I explained in my notes to begin with. The proposed credit in Bill No. 47 provides an additional 40 percent to the existing supports. So, no change necessarily, but just an add-on in that cost.

Under the Yukon's proposed new fertility and surrogacy tax credit, Yukoners will be able to claim fertility and surrogacy treatment expenses aligned with those expenses that are currently eligible under the federal medical expense tax credit. Eligible expenses include costs for prescription medications required for fertility procedures. Also of note, I do know that — I am going to leave it there for now, and I am going to assume that the member opposite might have further questions.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister, because he did at the end just say that prescription medication would be covered, and that was what the question was.

Another question that we have been asked is — people are very excited, and they are excited about filling out their taxes next year, which I think is an odd thing. We talk about taxes just after having done it, but they want to know what documentation they will need for submission as proof for their taxes next year. They have mentioned that it would be helpful for them to know this now as they are going through the process ahead of next tax season.

So, if the minister has an idea about which documentation will be required so that people can start stuffing stuff into a folder ahead of next season.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** So, as this is a lead from the Canada Revenue Agency, I took a look at their website, and all expenses claimed as eligible medical expenses must be supported by proper receipts. This would include details such as: the name and address of the service provider or supplier; date of the payment; amount of payment; description of the services and items purchased; and also the name of the individual for whom the services and/or item was provided. So, again, all documents must be retained for at least six years.

In addition to proper receipts, the Canada Revenue Agency's website states that individuals should retain copies of prescriptions, written certifications, and those types of things. Yukon government will work to update our website to ensure that there is clear direction for those claiming new fertility and surrogacy tax credits.

Also, if the question is completely just about documentation in general, as far as who you are as a person, this is all available on CRA's website. So, providing guidance on documentation required to support METC claims would be: name and address of the service provider or supplier, date of payment, description of services or item purchases, name of individuals or services and items that were provided, and amounts paid.

I'll leave it at that unless the member opposite has other specific question, but again, as far as documentation, all of this information is readily available on the CRA site, which is always a good read.

**Ms. White:** I don't know if I would say that I think the CRA website is a good read, but I appreciate that, as the Minister of Finance, that's probably a reference point. I guess right now it would probably be safe to say to folks to save it all. You can always wean through it as you get closer to tax time.

Just to echo the minister's words, I too am incredibly grateful to see the fertility tax credit here on the floor. It has felt like a very long time, and I'm just a participant on the sidelines,

so not someone who has been trying to do this. This is a big deal for folks, and I'm excited. The other changes are important too, of course — the change to the Yukon child benefit that gives people more compassionate time to make those changes.

I did, for the briefing, work really hard to understand the alternative minimum tax threshold, including the formulas that are in the bill and the cross-border transport of equipment. I appreciated the explanation for that too.

My only questions today were really based on the documentation required for the fertility tax credit, so I thank the minister and his official for the time, the briefing, and as always, taxes aren't that exciting, but they are really important, and they can do really important things for folks.

I thank the minister for bringing this forward, and I thank the official for the briefing.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** There are a lot of moving pieces to this, and I gave Clarke LaPrairie the compliment of how able he and his department are to clarify things on a layperson's basis. Most of this is not necessarily what the AMT is, or why the federal government decides how much capital gains they want to do, but there have been a lot of moving pieces from the federal government, and in that, we have identified, in our own legislation, that we had to make some very technical changes, and that was the 8.75 compared to the nine tax rate for the second tier of taxes.

This was the opportunity for us to make sure that we were in compliance to what the federal government does. I will, on a personal note, say that the AMT is a good thing. If there are an awful lot of ways — if you have the money and the resources to get around paying your fair share of taxes, then this is just another way to make sure that, with all those treatments and accountants, there is still an equitable treatment to those in higher tax rates.

I'm glad to see that, when they did this, they increased the lowest capacity of the AMT out of the \$40,000 range up to the \$173,000 range — otherwise, we would have had an awful lot of questions for Ottawa.

**Ms. White:** I recognize that there are only six clauses within the bill. If the minister is interested in going clause-by-clause, because he has something really exciting to add about any one of those lines, I am happy to support that, but if there is not an interest in going line-by-line, then I am happy to clear the lines.

**Ms. McLeod:** Before the minister was talking about the minimum taxes and the changes that are being made there — and I am not sure if I misheard, but I thought the minister made reference to 100 percent of capital gains being taxable, as opposed to 50 percent.

Understanding that I may have misheard that, I would like the minister to just re-explain that, please.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will say first that this is federal law, not Yukon law, and yes, when it applies to the AMT, there is 100-percent consideration for the capital gains. This is not in those other tax brackets; it's just where the AMT applies.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*?

Seeing none, we will now proceed with clause-by-clause debate.

**Ms. White:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, read and agreed to.

**Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 47 read and agreed to**

**Chair:** The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Unanimous consent has been granted.  
*Clauses 1 to 6 deemed read and agreed to*  
*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, without amendment.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Chair report Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

**Bill No. 217: *First Appropriation Act 2025-26* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

**Department of Environment — continued**

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

**Ms. White:** It is a delight to be jumping both feet into the Environment debate and I, of course, welcome the officials here today on what probably feels like the 900<sup>th</sup> day of the legislative Sitting.

I actually wanted to talk about new parks regulations. One of the new regulations states that an educational approach will be taken with the support of campground attendants. As an

example, for the south of Pelly, there are 44 campgrounds, seven park officers, and five trucks. These numbers do not take into consideration the north of Yukon's staffing and equipment. So, when we talk about an educational approach, how does the minister see that happening with 44 campgrounds, seven park officers, and only five trucks? Again, that is just from south of Pelly. I'll start there.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you for the opportunity to continue with general budget debate on the Department of Environment for fiscal 2025-26.

I did have this discussion with the Member for Kluane yesterday, but perhaps I can provide a bit more information.

As the Member for Takhini-Kopper King rightly indicated, this summer, Yukon Parks will prioritize an education-first approach to enforcement of the new regulations focusing on helping the public to understand and comply with the new regulations.

In addition, accessible information to help visitors to understand the new regulations will be available on yukon.ca, social media, and on-site signage.

Yukon Parks will continue to emphasize education and awareness encouraging users to respect park guidelines and the natural environment. This helps to ensure that everyone can enjoy the beauty and safety of our parks for generations to come.

By way of background with respect to all of the parks that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King referenced — all the wonderful parks from east to west and south to north — I certainly would encourage all Yukoners and any persons who are not from the Yukon who are listening today to avail themselves of these amazing opportunities of somewhere between 1,100 and 1,200 sites across the Yukon — absolutely a world-class experience. I'll get to the answer, but our exit surveys — and particularly our exit surveys from non-resident persons, tourists, and people visiting from the rest of Canada, which I suppose would be tourists as well, international tourists, and our friends from across Canada — at our campgrounds are overwhelmingly positive.

A really strong shout-out to the park officers, the park rangers, Conservation Officer Services, and any persons who are contracted to assist with that experience over the course of the season, which will be starting soon.

So, I'm advised that, with respect to the entire Yukon, 12 tickets were issued last year across all campgrounds — indicating, even before these new regulations come into force and effect, that education first was still the approach that one would take.

I think this is also in response to the questions from yesterday. There are no plans to hire additional park officers specifically to enforce the new regulations; however, the updated parks general regulation equips existing officers with enhanced tools to better manage park activities. This will help ensure the protection of the parks and maintain a safe, respectful environment for all users.

While education does remain a priority, the new regulations are enforceable, and enforcement actions may be taken if necessary.

As I indicated, in addition, Yukon Parks will be installing new signs in parks and creating updates to websites. Our site attendants and tourism staff will provide support to visitors. Visitor service operators will continue to be on-site at the Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, and Pine Lake campgrounds to assist with checking in, providing information and education on campground rules, and monitoring campground use. Yukoners will know that Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, and Pine Lake are three of the most popular and most used sites.

There is a great logistics plan in place for this summer with respect to the new regulations, but the bottom line is that it's really the same operational plan, and the same approach will be taken in the summer of 2025, of course, with a slightly higher educative function in place for this year.

**Ms. White:** Just for context, can the minister tell me the numbers of park officers, and can I get that broken down from north and south?

Can I get the number of campgrounds broken down from north and south — south of Pelly, north of Pelly — and the number of vehicles for each of those? I have said there are five in the south. How many are there available to the park officers in the north?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite. My officials in support here today — I guess I didn't pop up first — to my right is Deputy Minister Dennis Berry, and to my left is Assistant Deputy Minister Marc Cattet. They have heard the question, so I think that there are some specifics that we will have to get back to the member opposite on. However, I can provide some information here. As I'm on my feet, perhaps I can be provided with some additional information to the questions that were posed.

The Government of Yukon maintains 57 territorial parks, including 42 campgrounds with 1,189 campsites, 12 recreation sites, and national environment parks. We gather feedback from campers to help us continually improve the camping experiences we offer. We collect approximately \$1 million of revenue every year from the sale of camping permits. This number is small compared to the cost of maintaining Yukon's parks and campgrounds. As I indicated yesterday, the cost last year for the provision of firewood at the Yukon campgrounds was in the range of \$776,000, so you can do the math with respect to the recovery percentages currently.

The Yukon continues to charge some of the lowest camping fees in the country. We have heard during our public engagement on the *Yukon Parks Strategy* that Yukoners see parks as part of the territory's identity and an important public service that needs to be funded by the Government of Yukon, with a reasonable amount of cost recovery from people who use park services.

I talked about the pilot project with respect to reservations yesterday. I can also advise with respect to Tombstone, which — well, let's just say that all of the Yukon is a world-class environment — but one of the jewels is the Tombstone area. In 2024, the Tombstone Interpretive Centre welcomed 23,610 visitors, with 2,363 of those visitors participating in programs, a 28-percent jump from 2023. I'm sure that most of my

colleagues in the Assembly have been there, and it is an absolutely stunning landscape.

Yukon Parks recognizes the importance of camping and parks and continues to deliver a great outdoor experience for Yukoners and visitors.

With respect to the staffing — I'm just waiting to see whether I'm going to get any of that information with respect to staffing. Apparently, that information is pending.

I can advise that, in 2024, we invested around \$3.3 million to update infrastructure in several campgrounds, and in 2025, we are estimated to spend another \$2.3 million. I think this is very exciting. Between 2021 and 2025, we invested over \$3.6 million in new or upgraded boat launches across the territory in our campgrounds and recreation sites. I had the opportunity to travel to a number of those campgrounds where the boat launch facilities had been replaced and upgraded, and kudos to both Yukon Parks and to, in some cases, the private contractors who operationalized that project between 2021 and 2025. I know that Yukon boaters and boaters from elsewhere certainly appreciate the fact that this infrastructure has been significantly upgraded.

I'm advised that we have nine officers in the south and five in the north. There are 35 campgrounds in the south and seven campgrounds in the north. There are five trucks in the south and three in the north.

**Ms. White:** I guess one of the things that I have heard from park officers, including a dear friend who was a park officer and actually left the job because of the sheer number of hours that he spent driving — it was a huge amount of area to cover and it was essentially all in the vehicle.

One of the things that park officers have let me know is that they want to know if the minister believes that the current number of park officers and trucks are sufficient to implement an educational approach which they believe requires more staff and more time. So, how do we make sure that park officers have more time in campgrounds if they have to be on the road at a designated time to make sure that they hit their rounds? Is the department looking at hiring more staff? Are there going to be more vehicles accessible? Because as it stands, we are talking about eight vehicles for all of Yukon, which we know is vast.

I have one more question for that: Has the department sat down with park officers to say: Hey, how is it going? How do you feel about driving this much? Do you feel safe? Do you not feel safe? Do you have suggestions to make it better? With this new educational campaign that you are taking over, what resources do you need? Is it additional staffing? Is it additional trucks?

I want to know what kind of engagement happens with park officers — is there an intention to hire more of them? — and make sure that there are more vehicles available.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** That, of course, is an operational discussion between the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, and the director of Parks. This is the first year, and certainly, it's extremely exciting, because these regulations are 40 years in the making. I take the member's point and I know that my deputy minister has heard the member opposite loud and clear with respect to that, so I certainly will undertake to

have that discussion with my deputy minister at the next bilateral. I will take an active interest over the course of the early spring and summer as to how things are going. I am quite certain that my deputy minister and the director of Parks will come forward and advise if there are additional resources that are required in light of these long-overdue but certainly very well-received regulations by over 1,400, largely Yukoners who participated in surveys and provided their guidance, their support, and their input with respect to these.

I take the member opposite's point; it is a good point, and my deputy minister has heard the member loud and clear. Like I said, I undertake to be on this issue in the late spring and early summer.

**Ms. White:** I guess I would encourage the department to have those conversations ahead of implementing an education campaign to make sure that folks are feeling ready for it as opposed to asking them at the end of the year: How did it go? Because if you are already spread thin and this is just another mountain to climb up, I would hate to lose those folks.

I wanted to know about the role of campground attendants and if, within their roles, they are mandated for education and public engagement, or is it merely maintenance and that kind of general stuff?

The reason why I ask is, if the campground attendants are expected to do education outreach and that kind of engagement with campers, what kind of training are they getting? What kind of support will they have? If they're not, can the minister just let me know what their roles are?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I'll try to get more detailed information with respect to the visitor services operators, but as I indicated previously, visitor services operators will continue to be on-site at Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, and Pine Lake campgrounds — so, those are separate contracts — to assist with checking in, providing information, and education on campground rules and monitoring campground use. I will be provided with an answer with respect to enforcement; I won't speculate.

With respect to the prior question about existing officers, we are confident in our current approach of training existing officers and focusing on complaint-based enforcement which allows for efficient resource allocation and targeted action and education approaches through park officers, site attendants, visitor services operators, social media, and other methods.

Our park officer team in the south is almost a fully returning team. This is the first time in many years. I would say that is hopefully somewhat indicative of job satisfaction. I'm advised that park officers were key in developing these regulations. They were passionate in getting these in place and, of course, the Department of Environment will support them going forward.

I'm just waiting to see if there is any more information with respect to the visitor services operators.

Department of Environment has developed a training program with the park officer supervisors to make sure the teams have what they need, and that includes a training program for site attendants.

**Ms. White:** So, as we all know, there was a bear incident at the Pine Lake Campground last year where the entire campground needed to be evacuated. The reality is that we're seeing more bear reports in town and around campgrounds.

So, I wanted to know what the government's plan is for managing bear incidences.

I will point out that conservation officers aren't present in every community, and park officers are spread thin across their campgrounds. I think it is important to note again — despite the minister saying that it's an entirely returning team, which I think is fantastic — that they did just see the regulations that say "education", and so there are concerns; they are spread thin. So, I will note that they are spread thin.

Conservation officers aren't present in every community, and park officers are spread thin across their campgrounds. Will, for example, managing bear incidents be a campground attendant's role? If not, how does the minister see that working?

As an example, Conrad Campground had the most bear sightings, but the nearest conservation officer is in Carcross; therefore, it would be the role of the RCMP or it would require significant transit for the conservation officer or the park officer.

How does the minister envision managing bear incidents? Who is responsible? And how do we make sure, in campgrounds that are outside of communities — not near but far outside of communities — and that are not in close proximity to a conservation officer or to the RCMP — what does that look like?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** There are a lot of questions there. There weren't a ton of fact scenarios or hypotheticals, but there were a few. So, I would suggest that perhaps it would be best to return with a legislative return on that topic.

Just briefly, I am advised that the department uses a new territory-wide dispatch system called Delta 1 to coordinate responses with Parks and the Conservation Officer Services branch.

Perhaps I have a bit more information here.

Conservation officers are responsible for managing human-wildlife conflicts with the objective to keep people safe and wildlife alive and wild. The branch has one full-time human-wildlife conflict officer dedicated to coordinating responses, community and stakeholder engagement, training, and leading investigations into serious human-wildlife conflict incidents.

The branch participates in numerous initiatives to educate people and mitigate human-wildlife conflict. For example, an officer chairs the Whitehorse area bear working group which deals specifically with human-bear conflict in Whitehorse and surrounding areas. Additionally, Conservation Officer Services hosts an annual bear fair to educate Yukoners about bear safety, ecology, and attractant management. Conservation officers respond to hundreds of calls annually, as members opposite and the general public know, and kudos to them for their yeoman's work in that respect.

I know that maybe last year wasn't quite as busy as the year previously, but there have been some absolutely busy years, so I certainly acknowledge the member opposite's questions with



respect to bear-human conflict. They respond to hundreds of calls regarding public safety issues with wildlife. Officers are first responders and the primary investigative service for human-wildlife conflict, including conflicts resulting in bodily injury or death. When faced with high-risk human-wildlife conflicts, conservation officers risk their own safety, engaging with large animals such as bear or bison.

I guess at this juncture, I can keep going, but if there are a lot more questions and the member opposite wishes to bundle some questions and clear this department, we can do that, or I can just keep going and finish the day. My department has heard your questions and I would just quickly say kudos to Conservation Officer Services, park rangers, and campground experience officers. I certainly wish them all the best for this summer. I invite all Yukoners and all Canadians to participate in the fantastic Yukon camping experience.

**Ms. White:** A camping experience that has fully supported park officers with additional vehicles and additional bodies to do the new education campaign —

I take the minister's point about bundling things together. In the fall, my colleague asked about the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report that came out in 2024 entitled *Challenges to the Sustainability of the Yukon Salmon Stocks*. They asked at the time if there would be a formal response. We were told that there wouldn't be a formal response, so I'm hoping that the minister can come back with a return on recommendations 9, 11, 12, 13, and 31. I won't go through each of those individually, but I look forward to that.

We have a question about if there's any kind of plan to revamp or review the regulations around outfitters in the Yukon. Of course, we have all seen folks on social media talking about concerns — for example, around foreign ownership, allocations, and more — so it would be helpful to have a better understanding about what is happening there when we talk about that.

The minister has mentioned previously that they are considering legal options for the Chasàn Chuà — so, the McIntyre Creek Park — and I wanted to know what kinds of legal options are being considered and when we can expect those.

With that, Madam Chair, those are the final questions I have for the Department of Environment. I look forward to getting a really thick ministerial response on that, and I thank the officials for their time.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** My department has those questions and will certainly endeavour to respond in a timely fashion. I want to thank the Member for Kluane, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and, battling cleanup, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for their questions over the course of a few afternoons. I would also like to thank the Environment team for their professionalism in providing detailed policy responses and to Deputy Minister Berry and to Mark Cattet.

I look forward to clearing the Department of Environment main budget Committee of the Whole debate for fiscal 2025-26.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment?

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

**Ms. White:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried, as required.

### **Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried**

**Chair:** The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

***Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$55,088,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

***Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$3,835,000 agreed to***

***Total Expenditures in the amount of \$58,923,000 agreed to***

***Department of Environment agreed to***

**Ms. White:** Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Ms. White:** Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 20 adopted earlier today, Committee of the Whole will receive witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation. In order to allow the witnesses to take their places in the Chamber, the Committee will now recess and reconvene at 3:30 p.m.

*Recess*

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

### **Appearance of witnesses**

**Chair:** Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 20 adopted on this day, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

I would ask all members to remember to refer their remarks through the Chair when addressing the witnesses, and I would also ask the witnesses to refer their answers through the Chair when they are responding to the members of the Committee.

The time allotted for opening remarks is five minutes. I will warn you when you have 30 seconds remaining in your time.

Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, I believe you will introduce the witnesses.

*Witnesses introduced*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I would like to welcome to the Assembly today several folks as witnesses. We have, on our right, Mr. Doug Janzen, who is the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation board. We have Gary Gazankas, who is the CEO and president of the Yukon Development Corporation. Third from the right, second from the left, is Chris Milner, the president and CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation, who is returning here. To his right, our left, is Rod Savoie, the chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation board.

I will also say that for three of the four of these gentlemen, this is their first time, so I welcome them here to be witnesses for us. Lastly, I will say that I went to high school with Mr. Savoie. It has been several decades, but we were in Saskatoon together.

I welcome them here today.

**Chair:** Would the witnesses like to make brief opening remarks?

**Mr. Janzen:** Thank you for the opportunity to address the Legislature today to discuss how the Yukon Development Corporation fulfills its mandate to ensure a sustainable, consistent supply of energy in the Yukon. YDC collaborates with Indigenous governments, development corporations, public utilities, and all levels of government to deliver affordable, reliable, and renewable energy. We support the Yukon Energy Corporation in generating power for Yukoners and work with First Nations and stakeholders to advance renewable energy projects across the territory.

To meet growing energy demands and align with *Our Clean Future* goals, YDC is advancing long-term energy planning. A key initiative is the Yukon-BC grid-connect feasibility study which explores the potential for a cross-border energy grid. The complex project could expand power supply, reduce fossil-fuel emissions, enhance Arctic security, and promote reconciliation and shared prosperity. YDC also focuses on increasing winter energy capacity by engaging with First Nations and stakeholders.

Through the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative, we have funded 30 renewable projects since 2017 utilizing wind, solar, hydro, and other technologies to reduce fossil-fuel reliance.

I am proud of the work that the teams at both the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation are doing. Collaboration between both corporations is critical to ensure the continuing generation of electricity, which is foundational to modern life. Through collaboration, YDC, Yukon Energy Corporation, First Nations, and industry are generating Yukon's future. Together, we ensure reliable electricity that powers homes and businesses, innovation, and economic growth across the territory.

**Mr. Savoie:** I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to discuss with the Members of the Legislative Assembly how Yukon Energy is working toward a more resilient and reliable electricity system for Yukoners.

To set the stage, I want to point out that, on average, over the past 25 years, more than 90 percent of the electricity that

Yukon Energy generates comes from renewable resources despite being an isolated grid. This achievement reflects the innovation and dedication of the people, especially given the challenges of our northern context.

Most of the renewable electricity that Yukon Energy generates comes from hydro facilities that are located on the traditional territories of Yukon First Nations. We recognize First Nations as stewards of this land since time immemorial, and we are committed to cultivating meaningful relationships as essential partners and future leaders in energy development and investment.

Looking ahead, we know that Yukon's electricity system needs to be more robust, reliable, and renewable. Demand for electricity is growing and the way people use electricity is changing. Population growth and the move to electrification are driving winter peak demand. We need dependable capacity that can provide reliable winter electricity and support future community renewables. In the near term, this means using thermal sources.

We also face the challenge of an aging infrastructure. In fact, most of our electricity system was built more than 60 years ago. Despite ongoing maintenance and work, we're at a point where major upgrades are needed.

Finally, climate change is rapidly shaping our reality by changing planning parameters and creating critical infrastructure needs. As a result of these challenges, significant work and investment are needed in all aspects of Yukon's electricity system.

Since our last update, we've made notable progress in our efforts to create a more reliable and robust electricity system for Yukoners. This includes completing the first year of the voltage conversion project in Dawson, permitting the Callison generating station, and commissioning the replacement diesel generators in Faro. We are working toward relicensing of both the Whitehorse and Mayo hydro facilities as well as our diesel facilities in Faro, Mayo, and Dawson.

To guide Yukon Energy's future, we have released the road map to 2050 and chapter 1, our five-year strategic plan. We look forward to advancing this critical work in collaboration with government partners and Yukon First Nations.

I want to underscore that people are at the heart of everything that we do. The dedicated staff at Yukon Energy work hard to address the challenges of today while working to create the resilient electricity future that we all envision for the Yukon. We take great pride in our efforts and we believe that, with the support of Yukoners as well as government and First Nation partners, we can support Yukon's energy security and climate goals.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the opening remarks from the witnesses and welcome them here this afternoon to answer our questions. I have quite a few questions and I am going to dive right in.

The reports that were tabled yesterday — just with the limited time today, I am going to focus in on the 2025 to 2030 report, which is: *Building a Resilient and Renewable Energy Future: Chapter 1*. Just a quick question before we start. The

old plan, the 10-year renewable plan, which I believe was first introduced five years ago, is no longer available on Yukon Energy's website. I am just wondering if the witnesses can make it available on the website, or perhaps if I have overlooked where it is, they can direct me and others who are interested in where to find it.

**Mr. Milner:** Madam Chair, thank you for the question. The question is: Can we make available the 10-year renewable energy plan? The answer is yes.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that and look forward to checking on the website in the next while to see if it is there.

On page 3 of the report that I referenced, there is a quote there from the president and CEO of the Energy Corporation saying, "For the next five years, Yukon Energy will focus on increasing the supply of dependable winter power to meet growing demands and building a stronger, more resilient power system."

In opening remarks, I believe Mr. Savoie said that over the past 25 years, on average, 90 percent of the electricity was generated with renewable sources. But this past winter, with Aishihik partially shut down, how close were we to the system demand exceeding available supply? And how much of the generating, on average, was done by renewable sources this past winter during the peak demand periods?

**Mr. Milner:** Thank you for the question through the Chair. The question is: How close were we in terms of supply? In many cases, we are running 80 to 90 percent of available generation this winter. Now, the plan, as you rightfully stated, focuses on capacity development in the short term, and the reason for that is because our peaks in winter are significantly greater than they are in summer, so we are seeing three times the load in winter. The reason for that is that the colder temperatures drive the demand for electricity and the more capacity we need to have available. On an average day at minus 20, what we're seeing system-wide is that 80 percent of the capacity available is in use. That 20 percent remains our contingency factor for changes in temperatures, when machines and equipment break down and we have to take them offline and repair them.

The second part of your question, I believe — and I will confirm this with you after I finish — is the percentage of renewable. Typically, on an average year, we can see anywhere from 80 into the 90s of the percentage of renewable. A lot of factors influence that. A key factor this year has been low water in the Aishihik Basin. We rely heavily on Aishihik for hydro energy. This year, we saw lower waters heading into winter. We also saw a turbine go down that we're fixing now as well, so our access to that hydroelectricity was lower and put us in a situation where we were about 82-percent renewable for the 2024 year.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to confirm that 82-percent number — is that for the 2024 calendar year or was it for this past winter season?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, it was for the 2024 calendar year.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, I appreciate that. With some of the contingency planning for situations where demand may

exceed supply, has there been any consideration to rolling blackouts or service interruption for residential or business customers — not the industrial side of things; we'll get to that in a moment, but I'm talking about residential and business customers — has there been any consideration of rolling blackouts in some of the planning that the Energy Corporation would do?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, the question around rolling blackouts is factored in; it's part of our emergency planning in general. We heard earlier from the chairs of both YDC and YEC in particular, speaking to the fact that we have an isolated grid. That means that we need to generate here, locally, everything that we use.

Part of that is an obligation to plan for outages and prolonged outages. What we do in those cases is that we bring together agencies and, in this most recent situation this year, we worked really closely with EMO around mutual aid. As we approach the limits of available generation, we bring in our partners to discuss different scenarios to reduce that generation or to bring additional generation on. For example, ATCO has a number of generators spread around the Yukon. We would request that they bring those generators on as we approach our load limits. We request that mines and industrial customers self-generate; they come off the system at that time. We request — and we have done so in this year — that people pay attention to their own generation in their homes and businesses and reduce loads.

So, yes, there was consideration for rolling blackouts and a very structured response in terms of emergency planning that allowed for partners to come together and have discussions on what would happen in those situations.

**Mr. Kent:** Those rolling blackouts that are in the emergency planning — again, what would those look like? Would it be focused on businesses first and then residential? What would that look like as far as the implementation of rolling blackouts if we got to that situation?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, it's a technical question in terms of how the system works, but I'm going to answer it in a very general way.

When they plan for rolling blackouts, what they do is plan to shed load to allow for load to get spread out across a variety of customers. They don't want any one customer being without power for an extended period of time, so they would manage the system in a way that they can bring down load and shift it to other places so that people can have continuous power throughout the period of time that the system is experiencing an emergency.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, the witness mentioned utilizing ATCO generators. Some of the ATCO communities are off-grid; some are on-grid. So, I'm just wondering how many generators they have that are on-grid that could be utilized and just what communities those are located in.

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, ATCO has approximately five megawatts of generation on the system. I'm going to add some clarification to the mutual aid process that we talked about earlier. That highlights the assets that the City of Whitehorse has in terms of the Canada Games Centre having

a backup generator. Yukon government has a number of backup generators. So, these are all factored into our system planning and how we can shed loads quickly should we need to do so.

**Mr. Kent:** I do want to touch briefly on the industrial customers. I'm just trying to get a sense from the witnesses — how many industrial customers do we have? I'm aware of Hecla and the mine at Keno. What would constitute an emergency where industrial customers are disconnected?

Maybe I'll just leave it there and just make sure that we're only talking about the one industrial customer that we have at this point.

**Mr. Milner:** The first question: How many industrial customers? Victoria Gold and Heckla.

The second question around what constitutes an emergency — there is a lot of communication that goes between the industrial customers on a regular basis in Yukon Energy, because they have wide swings in their load. So, when they're starting up their plans, they're calling us with a courtesy call to say: We need this much demand; can you provide it? So, there's a lot of communication on a daily basis. The communication as we approach our load limits happens quite early in the forecasting period. So, if we see cold weather coming up, we will provide a notice that says: We're watching the weather; we're watching our loads; for these few days, we're going to be experiencing a tighter generation situation. The actual number that they use in terms of initiating that conversation is 80 percent, and then the significance of the request to the industrial customer increases as it goes to 85 and 90. We are working them as best we can through periods of time like this, and they'll be asked to curtail before they're asked to remove themselves from the grid — so, lower their loads before they're asked to remove as it goes through 80, 85, and 90 percent of our overall demand.

**Mr. Kent:** Can the witnesses tell us how many times in this past winter season the industrial customers were disconnected — the witness mentioned Victoria Gold and Heckla — and could he itemize if it was just one or the other or if it was both when they were disconnected?

**Mr. Milner:** The number of times that the mines were asked to curtail power used this winter — I'm getting approximately a dozen. However, if he wants a specific number, I can bring that back to him. But it's in that zone of approximately a dozen.

The important thing to acknowledge is that industrial customers have backup generators of their own on-site, so that's why the communication on a regular basis is important.

**Mr. Kent:** Do the witnesses know how much backup generation is available at those two sites? How much is at the Eagle Gold mine and how much does Heckla have access to in Keno?

**Mr. Milner:** We will have to take that specific question away.

**Mr. Kent:** I guess the other question then is: When those supplies are curtailed to the industrial customers, is that reflected in the amount they're charged for electricity? Does their bill go down as a result of their energy being curtailed or disconnected during emergencies?

**Mr. Milner:** Industrial customers pay for the energy they use.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that. I'll share that with those who have reached out to us. I did want to just direct the witnesses to page 5 on the 2025 to 2030 report that we're talking about. On that page, there's a graphic that says, "A single-dwelling home, on average, requires three times the amount of electricity when it converts from a propane or diesel heating source to electric heat." Then it goes on to say, "When electric vehicles are factored in, a household's electricity consumption can increase by five to six times."

When we're looking at the load forecasts and combing those with some of the commitments in *Our Clean Future* and the *Clean Energy Act*, for instance, one of the commitments is to have 4,800 electric vehicles on the road by 2030. Another commitment is where the Yukon government will lead by example by undertaking energy-efficiency retrofits and installing renewable heating systems to reduce GHGs from Government of Yukon buildings by 30 percent by 2030 compared to 2010. Obviously, the new homes being built in on-grid communities like Whistle Bend are electric heat, so are those commitments from *Our Clean Future* factored into the forecasts that are in the graphs at the top of the page?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, thank you for the question. The answer is yes. The mechanism is load forecasting that is shared between Yukon Energy and the Yukon government.

**Mr. Kent:** Can the witnesses give us a breakdown on how much additional load is from homes converting from diesel or propane to electric heat or the new electrical heat builds? Then, how many are as a result of the 4,800 targeted electric vehicles on the road, which, again, will increase the electricity consumption of the average house by five to six times?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, I can give you some specific numbers on EV growth. Approximately eight percent between now and 2030 is attributed to EVs. It's a little bit more complicated getting some of the home-heating data. I mean, we're talking about new builds. New builds are going in with incentives for retrofits and there's a complicated puzzle that happens there. I will tell you that our model is seeing four to five percent per year typically in load growth, and that's what we're responding to. The plan itself is really to get ahead of that on the capacity side and then add renewable energy sources so that we can utilize less diesel thermal energy.

**Mr. Kent:** I just wanted to confirm that the witness said eight percent as result of the 4,800 EVs — is that the total growth between now and 2030 when that goal is expected to be met?

**Mr. Milner:** Eight percent of the 2030 peak forecast is attributed to EVs. I can also confirm, thanks to information being shared, that electrification of homes is expected to be about five-percent peak load in 2030.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate that. I do have some questions — we'll move over to page 7 of that report that we're talking about. The graphic at the bottom there says the winter capacity gap in 2025 was supplied by 40 megawatts of rented diesel

generators. The winter capacity gap in 2035 will be supplied by around 85 megawatts of a mix of modular generation assets and rental diesel generators. And at the bottom, it says there will be around 45 megawatts of new winter capacity needed by 2035 in the Whitehorse area, which is, of course, the Yukon's largest and fastest growing electricity-load centre.

I have a few questions just around those statements. Can the witnesses tell us how many rented diesels there are currently and what communities those are in by number? How many are in Whitehorse, how many are in Faro, and how many are in Mayo?

**Mr. Milner:** Through the Chair, there's a total of 22 units — 10 in Whitehorse, seven in Faro, and five in Mayo.

**Mr. Kent:** When we look ahead to the winter capacity gap in 2035, I understand what rental diesel generators are, but can the witnesses explain what —

*Due to a power outage, the Chair recessed the Committee of the Whole.*

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

The Chair shall, on behalf of the Committee, offer our thanks to the witnesses for appearing today.

*Witnesses excused*

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### Chair's report

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 47, entitled *Act to amend the Income Tax Act (2025)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*, and directed me to report progress.

Finally, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 20 adopted earlier today, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the operations of the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned.

*The House adjourned at 4:30 p.m.*