



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Monday, March 14, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2022 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 — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre**

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### 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>Emily Tredger</b>	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
<b>Annie Blake</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, March 14, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**Withdrawal of motions**

**Speaker:** Before we begin the proceedings, the Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. The following motion was not placed on the Notice Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken in whole or in part: Motion No. 309, notice of which was given by the Minister of Community Services.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Introduction of visitors.  
Tributes.

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of Yukon Public Libraries March Break Take 5 program**

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I rise to tribute Yukon libraries' March Break Take 5 program, which runs until March 31 at participating libraries around the territory. We are fortunate to have a public library in most of our communities — 15 across the entire territory. Yukon public libraries are continually coming up with fun and informative programming and events for children and adults. During the March break, kids are looking to be entertained and have fun. Mr. Speaker, they don't have to look very far. As well as at participating libraries, the activity sheet can be downloaded from [yukon.ca/libraries](http://yukon.ca/libraries).

March Break Take 5 is a free, self-led activity and contest for Yukon children and youth. Read, move, make, care, and learn — participants just have to complete at least one activity in each category. For instance, read a new chapter of a book, picture book, or comic book or read aloud to a family member or pet. Move — play a sport or build something out of snow. Make — cook or help cook a meal, or make some art or music. Care — do something good for the planet, or do something nice for a pet or family member. Learn — try something new, learn a new word or phrase in a Yukon indigenous language, or set a goal and write it down. When they return their sheet with at least five activities completed before April 1, they will be entered into a random draw to win one of five \$25 local gift cards. For those who complete the entire sheet of activities, there is a chance to win a grand prize — one of two \$75 local gift cards. As I said earlier, it runs out on March 31.

As always, anyone who needs more information can e-mail the Whitehorse library at [yukon.ca](http://yukon.ca) or call 867-667-5239, or visit [yukonlibraries.ca/libraries](http://yukonlibraries.ca/libraries) or [yukon.ca/libraries](http://yukon.ca/libraries) for more information. Participants are asked to ensure that they have permission from a parent or guardian to do these activities,

including the use of tools, equipment, or the Internet. You can also visit Yukon Public Libraries' social media accounts to interact with library staff and find out about programming and services.

Beyond borrowing books, these public libraries allow Yukoners to access learning opportunities, work spaces, and meeting rooms and make connections within the community. I am truly amazed by the passion that Yukon library workers put into their communities.

I welcome all Yukoners to visit their local library anytime — March break or any other time of year.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Yukon Public Libraries for their work in keeping young learners engaged and inspired during their time away from school with their March Break Take 5 activities.

Children are asked to log their activities this spring break in true bingo style — under five categories, each of which get the kids moving, thinking, and doing in a different way. “Read”, “Move”, “Make”, “Care”, and “Learn” are the categories. Most, if not all, of these tasks will be fun for kids and allow them to get the most out of their spring break. Of course, this is an opportunity for parents to have the kids help with household chores, help cook a meal, read to a sibling, or do something nice for the family.

This program includes some pretty fun tasks. Some are aimed to get kids moving and thinking. Others bring out creativity and thoughtfulness. Remember to submit forms to your local library by April 1 for a chance to win a prize. There is a prize for those who complete one task in each category and a grand prize for someone who completes all 20.

Thanks again to Yukon libraries. We encourage all families to get involved.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** The Yukon NDP shares the enthusiasm of our colleagues and the territory around reading, activity, and libraries. Libraries — we love them. Their fantasy-filled space is open to everyone in the community, a place to take a break from the stress of life or study for an upcoming midterm, a place to meet new friends, explore new worlds, or simply get out of the cold for a little while.

Libraries are a centrepiece in any community where parents go for a much-needed break while their kids socialize, learn, and play, where travellers can connect with home, and everyone can let their imaginations go wild.

Shelves are overflowing with knowledge and the art of generations, taking us to faraway places, teaching us about the past, the present, and what could be in the future. Books teach us lessons on how to interact with each other and how to be ourselves. Books teach us about love, about acceptance and our differences. We don't need to look far to learn about the power of reading with a child and how it can lead to lifelong learning.

This year's March Break Take 5 challenge from the Yukon libraries is a delight. Asking young people to complete one

activity in each of the five categories for a chance to win a prize or, for those who are truly ambitious, completing all 20 activities for a chance to win the grand prize is so much fun.

Thank you to those who dreamed up this adventure, which encourages reading, moving, making, caring, and learning. Thank you to our librarians and everyone involved, ensuring that these special places will be here for generations to come.

*Applause*

### In recognition of Pi Day

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Today is Pi Day, March 14 — or, as one local teacher called it, “the ideas of March”.

Pi Day is a day for lovers of math — “philomaths”, some people call them. I call them “awesome”.

Pi Day is a day to celebrate numeracy, the ability to understand and work with numbers. Math is so important for students — and adults, for that matter — for everyone. Math helps to unite us to understand the world around us, from the simple to the sublime.

Given that this is a tribute, let’s have some fun with numbers. When I say “fun with numbers”, I do not mean that phrase in the pejorative sense where people mislead with fancy statistics. For the record, it’s the people part of that equation that usually goes sideways.

No, I mean let’s take a minute, or 3.14, to celebrate math and numbers in the pure sense of exploration and wonder. Let’s begin.

In this Legislature, we have one Speaker, 18 MLAs, three clerks, and one Sergeant-at-Arms, for a total of 23 people. Even though there are 365 days in a year, the odds are just better than 50:50 that, with 23 people, there are at least two people who share a birthday. My birthday is 10/27/1962.

Pi is a transcendent, irrational number meaning that the digits go on forever and ever without pattern — 3.1415926 — and this, in turn, means that you can eventually find all patterns of numbers in the digits of pi as it stretches out. For example, you can find my birthdate at position 5,338,294, and it can be found an additional three times in the first 200 million digits of pi.

Our first record of pi dates back about 4,000 years. To put this into context, infinity appeared in math about 2,500 years ago. Zero, the reciprocal of infinity, arrived about 2,000 years ago. Our modern decimal numbering system is even more recent, arriving from India via Arabia.

Archimedes, one of history’s most acclaimed mathematicians, was the first to estimate pi to two decimal places, 3.14. At the time of the gold rush, pi was known to more than 500 decimal places. When I was born in 1962, it was more than 100,000 decimal places. Today, we know more than 68 trillion digits of pi, which, if printed, would fill all the shelves of the 15 Yukon public libraries many times over.

By the way, at the time of the gold rush, the Indiana state legislature introduced, and nearly passed, a law stating that pi should be 3.2 — full stop. I’m happy to report that, in the end, the geeks won that day.

Pi Day is the International Day of Mathematics. The theme for 2022 is “Mathematics Unites”.

The beauty of math is that you can go from zero to infinity in a blink — faster than the speed of light squared. From beatboxing to the beating of hummingbirds’ wings, from fractals to fusion, from commerce to comets, from parables to paradoxes, from “time flies like an arrow” to “fruit flies like a banana”, numbers are the truth and mystery beneath it all — from simplicity, complexity, and beyond, in 3.14 minutes.

*Applause*

**Ms. Tredger:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party to pay tribute to Pi Day.

Today, across the world, people are baking pies and sharing math facts, and it is a delight to see. For many of these people, their enjoyment of pi and math started with a teacher — a teacher who worked hard and creatively to make math fun — so today I would like to thank those educators.

Learning about numbers and number concepts starts very early, so I would like to start by thanking the early childhood educators who encourage their students to explore the world and to engage with a sense of wonder as they learn about counting and measuring. Then there are the elementary and high school educators who gave their students the tools they need to understand everything from carpentry to finances to baking. To all of these educators, know that the work that you do is so valuable, and thank you.

*Applause*

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

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have for tabling a document that shows the Yukon Party leader’s tacit support for rent indexing as part of our confidence and supply agreement with the Yukon New Democratic Party.

**Ms. White:** I have for tabling an article from the *The New Yorker* dated November 8, 2021, entitled *What It’s Like to Fight a Megafire: Wildfires have grown more extreme. So have the risks of combatting them.*

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

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I move:

THAT this House congratulates Yukoner Graham Nishikawa on his guiding of Canadian Paralympic legend Brian McKeever during the 2022 Beijing Paralympics.

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

THAT this House supports the Yukon Energy 10-year renewable electricity plan as endorsed by all parties during the 2021 election.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make emergency texting services, such as “TEXT with 9-1-1”, available in Yukon.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Community safety planning program

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to an important step forward in making Yukon communities safer. Yukon First Nation governments, organizations, and citizens have been working very hard to address safety issues in their communities and they have expressed a need for a structured and dependable community safety planning program and funding that will help enhance safety for them and their families.

Yukon government has worked with our communities and listened to the perspectives of Yukoners across the territory. We have committed to creating a community safety planning program that would meet the needs and ensure that communities can serve their citizens so that everyone can feel safe and valued.

I am now proud to announce that the first phase of the new community safety planning program will be available to Yukon First Nation governments and will support local community safety assessments, planning initiatives, and implementation. We know that First Nation governments are best suited to understand the needs of their communities and that community safety planning is integral to the safety and well-being of northern and remote communities.

Our budget over the next eight years identifies a total of nearly \$3 million to advance community safety initiatives. First Nation governments will be able to access up to \$200,000 each to support the creation of their community’s safety plan. Funding will need to be spent within a three-year window. The First Nation governments could apply for funding on more than one occasion, up to a maximum of \$200,000.

It is important that communities lead their own assessments of local safety concerns, as they know the issues that burden their community and how to address them. That is why they will lead and identify ways to mitigate the issues that they face and to implement solutions that work for their citizens. The program, which will be developed in collaboration with First Nation communities, will offer clear criteria, outline the steps to apply for funding, and ensure equitable access to funding for all Yukon First Nation governments. Information on how to apply, specifics of what funding can be used for, and more information on how the program works will be available later this year, following work with our partners.

I would like to note that our work will not stop here. The second phase of our work will design options for municipalities, local advisory committees, and even neighbourhoods to enhance community safety. The Yukon government will be working with partners to explore funding models on how we can best support those organizations,

advisory committees, and neighbourhoods to make their communities safer.

Thank you to the leadership of the Department of Justice, Yukon First Nation governments, municipalities, and Yukon organizations for working together to make Yukon communities safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cathers:** I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to respond to this statement and to the continued success of the committee safety program, as well as the additional elements announced today.

It was in the spring of 2016 that, along with Chief Doris Bill and Premier Pasloski, I was pleased to announce that the Yukon government would provide more than \$1.4 million in funding, over three years, for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation community safety liaison officer pilot program. We are glad to see that the program — which started thanks to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation in Whitehorse and was supported by a previous Yukon Party government — has come so far. I also want to recognize Gina Nagano for her work in developing that original program.

This was a great idea, and we are thankful that it has spread to other communities. The people behind the original project and those who are continuing to grow the program and initiatives related to it deserve our thanks and gratitude. It is great to see the program become noticed on a national level, thanks to Gina Nagano and her team at the House of Wolf.

On behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition, I congratulate them for winning an Arctic Inspiration Prize. We understand that the prize money will not only go toward developing more programs, but will help host the first of its kind indigenous safety summit in Whitehorse in August.

No matter where you live, crime affects everyone, and the pandemic has put an additional strain on our communities and individuals. To see programs like this take centre stage in helping to address community safety is welcome news, and we wish them ongoing success.

I would, though, also like to address the concerning increase in crime that we have seen in recent years. Many Yukoners are concerned about crime in all communities. We have heard from business owners who are expressing their concern about break-ins and thefts, particularly in Whitehorse and the surrounding area. You don’t have to look very far to see reports of break-ins at small businesses or individuals having their vehicles broken into. Sadly, this is becoming more common. This is unacceptable, and a strong message needs to be sent that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated in our communities.

While we do want to acknowledge and recognize successes today, it is also clear that government needs to do more to work with communities, including Whitehorse, to address the growing amount of crime, including increasing resources for the RCMP.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for her statement, and we congratulate the ongoing leadership that we see from Yukon

First Nation governments in making Yukon communities safer for everyone.

We have all seen the success of the community safety officers, like those in Kwanlin Dün or the aunties in Teslin. Of course, we saw the recent AIP award to the indigenous-led community safety partnership program developed by House of Wolf & Associates. But what does it really mean?

From my own settler perspective, it means that Yukon First Nations are taking the lead to address the root causes affecting their communities. This is a beautifully powerful action — one that, with Yukon government financial support, rests well within the justice recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

We agree that Yukon First Nation governments are best suited to understand the needs of their communities. We're interested to see how this newly announced program will continue to support them. We're also interested to see what happens with the second phase of this work that will happen with both municipalities and others.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** By empowering communities to respond to the unique challenges that they face, we are helping to create a safer territory for everyone.

In 2021, we made a promise to Yukoners to continue our work to help make neighbourhoods, communities, and our territory safer for them and their families. We promised in our platform that we would enhance community safety planning programs and develop a consistent approach to funding community safety planning activities across the territory. I'm happy to say that we have begun to do just that.

Starting this year, Yukon First Nation governments will have access to critical funding to develop community safety initiatives that will be tailored to their community and respond to their unique priorities and concerns.

In addition, by providing this funding to Yukon First Nation governments, we are fulfilling an action item in Yukon's MMIWG2S+ strategy that calls for support for community safety assessments, plans, and implementation, because we know how they work.

We will continue to work directly with Yukon First Nation governments on how the funding may be used to increase safety in their communities. Work is already underway to strengthen safety in Yukon First Nation communities.

Just over a week ago, an Arctic Inspiration Prize was awarded to Gina Nagano and the team at House of Wolf for their development of the Indigenous Community Safety Partnership program.

This first of its kind, indigenous-led community safety program is helping Yukon First Nations address root causes of intergenerational trauma and violence in their communities through traditional ways of teaching and justice, with the help and hard work of their community members.

So far, House of Wolf has worked with five communities in the Yukon under this program: Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Teslin Tlingit Council, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, and the Selkirk First Nation. The House of Wolf team will continue to develop more training for

its programs and host the first indigenous safety summit in Whitehorse this summer.

We will continue to work directly with Yukon First Nation governments to identify and address the issues in their communities. Over the coming months, we will continue to explore options for safety planning initiatives for municipalities and local advisory committees.

Thank you again to the Department of Justice and the Yukon First Nation governments, all the community safety officers, and other Yukon organizations for their dedication to making Yukon communities safer. I truly look forward to our continued shared work to ensure that every Yukoner feels safe in their community and in this beautiful territory.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Fuel prices

**Mr. Dixon:** The inflation crisis continues to hurt Yukoners. Last week, the chair of the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon explained the impact of high fuel prices for the tourism industry. He said — and I quote: “It is a hit to the cost of production of tourism products at every level and that can't be ignored.” Unfortunately, ignoring it is exactly what this government is doing. We have suggested waiving the fuel tax for the year, but the government has refused.

So, what will the government do to help Yukoners with the soaring cost of fuel, or will it continue to simply ignore this problem?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** First of all, I would like to thank TIAY — the tourism industry association — for the work that they have been doing and the constant dialogue that we have had the opportunity to have with that association, as well as the Yukon chamber, the Whitehorse chamber, and others that are supporting tourism here.

It is important to note that the programs that we have put in place over the last two years have helped to make sure that we can sustain a tourism industry, whether it was our summer program last year with incentives and rebates — and then throughout the winter. We are keeping a strong eye on what is happening. For any tire traffic that is coming, it's not only the price of fuel that they're paying here, but the price of the fuel in a number of other jurisdictions. All the while, that is being driven up by what we are seeing in the cost of oil overall.

Again, we are going to continue to work with the industry. We are going to continue to make sure that we support them and continue to monitor what's happening here as we move forward.

**Mr. Dixon:** The chair of TIA went on to say that for most tourism operators, it's too late to raise prices to offset the cost of more expensive gas. He said — and I quote: “They'll take the hit on top of the huge hit they already took from COVID...”

This is another knock against our already struggling tourism industry, but the government could significantly cushion that blow if they chose to. They could simply waive the fuel tax for the year to help our tourism industry get back on its

feet. Why is the government refusing to take action to help Yukoners address the rising cost of fuel?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think that it is important to share with the Assembly and with Yukoners that we understand the sensitivity that is around this and the impact, but I think that it is also fair to say that, no matter where you live on this planet, if you decide to go on vacation this year, you will have costs that have increased because this is not a regional issue; this is a global issue being driven by many, many factors.

So, again, we have looked at our inflation increase to date here in Whitehorse. I think that it is the second lowest in the country. Again, we are making sure that we can support and incentivize — which we have, all the way through our tourism industry. We will continue to work and listen to what they are saying. I was in dialogue with Mr. Hartling shortly after his interview that morning and we will continue to listen to advice that they give us.

**Mr. Dixon:** It is interesting to hear the minister say that he understands the impact of this on the industry and yet he is still refusing to act. We know that the Minister of Economic Development has already ruled out waiving the fuel tax as nothing more than “boutique”. The Yukon Liberal government is starting to stand out for their inaction. We know that Alberta has already waived their fuel tax. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, their energy regulators have invoked special tools to push prices down. South of the border, a growing number of governors and state lawmakers across the US are calling for the suspension of gas taxes to provide relief. Even President Joe Biden is considering suspending gas taxes, but here in the Yukon, the Liberals and the Minister of Economic Development dismiss helping Yukoners as “boutique”.

So, if the Liberals won't waive the fuel tax, what measures will they take to help Yukoners address the rising cost of fuel?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't think that the Minister of Economic Development is dismissing anything. I think that he is working extremely hard on short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions, including taking a scan of all the other jurisdictions in Canada and monitoring what they are doing with their current gas prices, which is interesting information.

Again, we have the lowest gas tax in Canada. That is not to say that we are not doing anything. Since hitting a 30-year high in August of five percent, inflation in Whitehorse has fallen back to 3.7 percent. We have been monitoring this situation for close to a year now. Our budget that is presented in the Legislative Assembly is full of initiatives and programs that are designed to make sure that life in the north is affordable. We have been saying that for five years.

The members opposite have presented us with an option. We are working on all fronts to make sure that we have long-term, short-term, and medium-term solutions that complement the work that we have already been doing to keep things as cheap as we possibly can for how much it costs for everybody, including affordable childcare, including cutting the small business tax right to zero, and including raising the minimum wage and doubling medical travel. That's where we are, and we are going to continue with solutions in the short, medium, and long term.

### Question re: Cost of living

**Mr. Cathers:** This Liberal government, we've seen, is actually working on making efforts to increase the cost of living for Yukoners. The cost of living is going through the roof for Yukoners, and another significant part adding to that rising cost is insurance. Many Yukoners have seen their insurance rise over the past number of years. In 2020, the Liberal government doubled the tax on insurance premiums, which is contributing millions of dollars to these skyrocketing increases. This increase, brought in by the Premier, amounts to a \$4-million tax increase, and this is a tax increase that every single Yukoner has to pay when they insure their home or their vehicle. Will the government consider undoing the significant tax increase that they brought in just as the pandemic began?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is interesting because, you know, when it comes to affordability, one only needs to look at our electricity rates. Yukoners are understandably concerned about the recent increases to electricity rates, and they can thank the Yukon Party for that. The largest factor that caused the recent rate increases was the LNG plant from the Yukon Party — that they borrowed to bring online. They delayed putting the project to rate before 2016 and basically delayed paying off the credit card that they ran up at that time.

The member opposite brings up an interesting perspective right now. We are, as I mentioned earlier, continuing to explore options in the short term to make sure that we continue to lead the nation when it comes to affordability. We've done that over the last five years. As I mentioned earlier, we reduced the small business tax to zero. What this budget does not include is any increases to taxes. There are no increases to taxes; there are no new taxes in this budget.

Again, we are discussing long-term energy security in Canada. Premiers are very interested in finding a way of reducing the financial burden on Canadians. We are working on a national level, and we are trying to reduce, at a national level, our dependence on other countries, but here locally, we have a suite of options to make lives affordable for Yukoners.

**Mr. Cathers:** I do have to remind the Premier that, in fact, tens of millions of dollars in electrical costs are directly due to Liberal decisions.

In 2020, the Premier told the Legislature not to worry about increasing taxes on insurance premiums because all the insurance companies are in Ontario and Québec, but, unsurprisingly, he was wrong.

In their 2021 tax review, the independent firm KPMG warned that this would happen. They said that while the insurer usually pays insurance premium tax, some provinces and territories, including Yukon, make the tax payable by the insurer or policyholder when the coverage is obtained from an insurer who is not licensed in the particular province or territory.

This, of course, is bad news for anyone who needs insurance in the Yukon. Every person who has insurance here is now paying more as a direct result of the Premier's \$4-million tax hike.

Will the Premier acknowledge that his deliberate decision to double the taxes has implications for Yukoners and agree to

undo his tax hike to help Yukoners struggling with the cost of living?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, we heard the member opposite trying to connect these two things in the past, and he is the only one who can find some kind of connection between the two. Again, what we're doing is we're investing heavily in this budget to make sure that life is affordable for Yukoners — \$17 million for community housing, \$27 million for lot development, \$11 million in initiatives for residential construction projects like the proposed Kwanlin Dün First Nation subdivision expansion in Copper Ridge — an exciting project. There is over \$10 million for mixed use when it comes to a 10-building project in Old Crow — so in rural communities as well. This is just one of our departments' work.

We could talk about our inflation outlook. We could take a look at every single department and how they are making lives more affordable.

The member opposite is trying to connect two dots that are not connectable, and we are absolutely alive and aware to the situation as far as insurance rates. But to make that connection, he's definitely connecting things that aren't connected.

So, again, we will continue to make historic investments to create programs and services for Yukoners to make sure that their lives are more affordable.

We're not done there with the budget. The budget has been produced, and then there is a conflict in Ukraine. So, we are absolutely aware of the situation that is happening in Ukraine and why things are more expensive. We will be working on more things on a shorter term.

**Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, the Premier is all over the map with his response. One thing that he was right about is that I did warn him that insurance companies would pass on his tax hike to their customers.

The rising cost of insurance affects businesses, organizations, and individuals. We have heard from them all that insurance costs have been increasing significantly. This is a particular challenge during the pandemic and due to inflation. However, the Premier and his government decided to hike the tax on insurance premiums right as the pandemic was setting in.

This Liberal tax hike is increasing the cost of living. Anyone with common sense knows that if government raises taxes by millions of dollars on insurance companies, they are going to charge their customers every single dime of it.

Will the Premier agree to undo his tax hike and help Yukoners with the rising cost of living?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon. I have to begin by saying that, once again, the Yukon Party is proving unreliable as a source of information. This doesn't have to do with any tax increase; it has to do with catastrophes across the western hemisphere, specifically in Canada. We just saw the mudslides in BC. We saw roads, bridges, and railways getting wiped out. We are seeing the effects of flooding in the Southern Lakes. We are seeing all of these catastrophes — a lot of them brought about by global

warming — landing on and driving up our insurance rates. That is really one of the drivers.

Here in the Yukon, my team in Community Services and I have been working with the Insurance Bureau of Canada to identify ways that we can reduce the insurance burden on condo owners and other residential properties. I am working with the Department of Justice to identify ways we can work to change our legislation to actually bring some costs down. We are also working with the Insurance Bureau of Canada to identify other sources of insurance in Canada so that the competition will help to bring these costs down.

We have heard from landlords on this issue. We are working very closely with them. I have every confidence that, over the coming months and years, we will have a much broader range of insurers for Yukoners to draw on.

#### Question re: Health care services

**Ms. Blake:** It has been six months since the territory's only public walk-in clinic closed. The only option that Yukoners are left with is to go to the emergency room. From prescriptions to blood work, they have to spend hours waiting at the hospital for basic health care. The minister had months to realize that walk-ins should not fall on the shoulders of one clinic only, because if they close their walk-in services like the River Valley clinic had to do in August, the entire territory is left without this essential service. Yukoners need a public walk-in clinic.

Will the minister finally direct her department to work on opening a public walk-in clinic?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The *Putting People First* report, as we all know, found that approximately 21 percent of Yukoners do not have access to a regular health care provider. As we implement the recommendations from that report, we remain committed to expanding access to primary health care services.

In fact, it is the commitment to that report that would allow government to consider opening a walk-in clinic because currently, of course, medical practitioners are private business owners and many, if not all — except for a few exceptions in particular programs — are not employed by the Government of Yukon.

We are currently working toward opening a new walk-in clinic here in Whitehorse. The initiative is just one piece of the work that we are doing to expand primary health care and to respond to the *Putting People First* recommendations.

**Ms. Blake:** We need health care from birth until death. From family doctors to counsellors, optometrists, dieticians, and nurse practitioners, so many health care workers can fill the gap in primary care. In Yukon communities, nurses and nurse practitioners are the ones who are keeping residents healthy, but they are overworked and understaffed.

After years of failing to hire health care workers, this government is failing to come up with a new plan. How many community nursing positions remain unfilled in the territory?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The focus of this government on *Putting People First* and a true transformation of Yukon health care are absolutely critical so that individual Yukoners can have



the best possible people-centred care that they deserve. Our government is aware that some local physicians have closed their primary care practices. I am certainly aware of the concerns that we have with recruitment and retention of physicians and of nurses. It is our top priority.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has impacted recruitment efforts and resulted in some additional staffing pressures here in the territory. For example, between 2017 and early 2020 — so pre-pandemic — there was about a five-percent vacancy among primary health care nurses within the Community Nursing branch. During that period, no agency nurses were required. Certainly, we have a different situation now here in the territory. Due to the pandemic, there is difficulty in recruiting, and vacancy rates are fluctuating — certainly higher than five percent at this time. The pandemic has significantly impacted our ability to recruit nurses, physicians, and other care providers — but again, not just in this community. We are working hard to solve this problem for Yukoners every day.

**Ms. Blake:** Some Yukoners have been waiting for years to have a routine health checkup. Some Yukoners have given up on seeing a doctor altogether. This has grave consequences for the health care system. How many serious conditions are late to be detected because Yukoners are unable to have regular blood work or doctors' appointments? If this government has learned anything from the pandemic, it should be that public health is essential.

Does the minister believe that leaving Yukoners without proper access to primary health care is acceptable?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I appreciate the tone of the question, but of course, I don't believe that having Yukoners without primary health care is acceptable, and nobody on this side of the House does. Frankly, we've been working very hard to make sure that it is not the case.

We continue to explore options to connect Yukoners to primary health care services. I take some issue with the concept in the question that there are Yukoners who are waiting for things like regular blood work. Of course, a delayed opportunity for people to see a medical practitioner unfortunately sometimes has the effect of people not receiving the care that they need when they need it. We are working extremely hard to make sure that this is not the case.

I mentioned earlier that we're working with the medical community to focus on having an opportunity of a walk-in clinic here in Whitehorse to help with some of the individuals who are not able to attend there any longer. I would like to thank the medical practitioners who are prepared to work on this project with the Government of Yukon. They are concerned as well about providing primary health care for individuals here in the City of Whitehorse and other places. They're working together with us to solve this problem. We're working strongly to recruit new medical practitioners.

#### **Question re: Mental health services for LGBTQ2S+ community**

**Ms. Tredger:** All Genders Yukon Society funds low-barrier mental health services for trans, non-binary, and two-spirit Yukoners and their families. This service is critical

because health disparities in the LGBTQ2S+ community are staggering.

A recent Canadian study found that two-thirds of trans teenagers had seriously considered suicide in the last year.

All Genders Yukon's funding for mental health service is literally a lifeline but, due to inadequate funding from this government, they have had to cut back therapy appointments to just one appointment each month. When a child is suicidal, going to therapy once a month is just not enough.

Given the mental health risks faced by the trans community, how can the minister believe that having access to one therapy appointment a month is adequate?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I'm not going to speak about anything specific to an individual patient, which the question seems to lead to. What I am going to say is that All Genders Yukon received some funding during the COVID-19 pandemic that has been reduced, but their overall funding has, in fact, been increased. I will get the numbers for the member opposite and hopefully be able to resolve her concern with respect to that particular aspect of it.

Community-based mental health services are a priority for this government, and with the creation of the mental wellness hubs, there is now a network of mental wellness support workers, counsellors, and mental health nurses providing services and care for Yukoners in all communities, including here in Whitehorse.

Staffing across the mental wellness hubs is an ongoing process. This leads back to the question previously asked, and we are meeting operational needs and delivering important, necessary services to Yukoners.

I would like to thank the individuals who work with the Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services unit here in Whitehorse, as well as the individuals who work in the hubs and the staffing. We truly know how difficult the last few years have been. We know that individuals are coming to you and asking for help and that you are providing the services you can.

I will continue my answer.

**Ms. Tredger:** In this government's own LGBTQ2S+ action plan, they commit that they will: "Improve access to supportive mental health and wellness services for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners."

If the government really means these nice words, why is the funding, no matter how they add it up, so inadequate that essential services need to be cut?

Will the minister put the money where her mouth is and commit to better funding for All Genders Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I'm honoured to stand today to speak to our relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. I thank the member opposite for her question, and I take note that there were other concerns raised in general debate earlier this week. My colleague and I will be following up on those specifics.

I want to say that, when our government took office in 2016, there was no relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. I, along with the Minister of Health and Social Services at the time and the now Minister of Health and Social Services, sat down and started a dialogue and a relationship. It

resulted in the first action plan for the LGBTQ2S+ community — ever — in the Yukon and the first consultation that ever happened with the community.

I am really proud that we were able to contribute to the formation of the first Pride Centre. There is money in this year's budget, last year's budget, and in the year to come — again, providing funding where there was no funding at all.

I will be happy to continue to build on my answer going forward and to speak to the member opposite at any time.

**Ms. Tredger:** This just doesn't add up. On the one hand, this government says that they support the LGBTQ2S+ community and they want to improve their access to mental health services. On the other hand, Yukoners who have some of the highest risks of suicide are seeing their therapy appointments cut.

Again, if a child was suicidal, would anyone here be okay with them getting just one therapy appointment a month? I can't imagine that the answer is yes.

So, how can the minister justify underfunding critical mental health supports for the trans, two-spirit, and non-binary community in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Again, thank you for the questions and bringing this important question to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Our government has worked with the LGBTQ2S+ community over the last many years. We have changed a number of pieces of legislation. We have introduced the first action plan that the Yukon Territory has ever seen, and we have provided funding where there was no funding. We now have core funding for Queer Yukon. Last year, we provided \$500,000. This year, we are providing \$425,000, and there is money next year. We are also providing funding specific to gender gear, which is coming from Health and Social Services specifically.

Some of the actions that we have taken are: expanding health care insurance coverage for gender-affirming therapies, procedures and surgeries, including supports around this work; providing HIV pre-exposure and post-exposure medications at no cost; integrating inclusive language into a new official Government of Yukon communication style guide and changing our language in important laws that govern our territory.

We are committed to inclusion and working with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

#### **Question re: Flood preparedness**

**Mr. Hassard:** Last week, we asked some simple questions about flood preparation in light of the notably high snowpack numbers recently announced by Environment Yukon. Unfortunately, rather than provide Yukoners with assurances about flood preparation, the Minister of Community Services used his time to launch attacks on the Yukon Party. It became clear that even the minister's colleagues were getting uncomfortable with his antics, so we would like to give him another chance to actually answer the question.

The Village of Carmacks would like to see an engineering study on flood mitigation in Carmacks and for government to support the construction of a berm or dyke similar to that of

Dawson. Does the government support this idea? If not, what other steps are being taken to address the flooding concerns in Carmacks?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite this afternoon. We just had more snow this last weekend, so the flooding is going to be on everyone's mind. The Community Services team at Emergency Measures is working very, very hard to ensure that we are prepared for this year's flood season. I hope that it doesn't materialize — we don't know — but right now, the snowpack is certainly raising people's awareness.

We are working very hard to make sure that we have sandbags. We have 300,000-plus sandbags in Community Services ready for this year's flood. We have really good relationships, as I mentioned on the floor before. I have met with Brigadier-General Godbout about this coming season. We held meetings last week with municipal officials to hear what their concerns are and to start work on addressing them.

We are still in early days, Mr. Speaker. It's March, and we know that the flooding usually happens in May and June. We are working very hard to have the material, the safety measures, and the understanding of what communities want. We will address those concerns as they come forward.

**Mr. Hassard:** So, no answer for the folks in Carmacks.

Another community that has faced flooding concerns is Mayo. The recent data from Environment Yukon highlighted that the Stewart River Basin had one of the highest snowpacks for this time of year. Mayo has faced flooding issues before for several reasons, and the community has been pushing for a more permanent solution to protect the community.

Has the government supplied the community with flood mitigation supplies for this year? What steps are being taken to address the longer term issues of flooding in Mayo?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It's important that Yukoners understand — and I understand the importance of this issue to Yukoners. I understand the questions coming from the opposition benches.

I want to speak to Yukoners and let them know that Community Services, last year, faced some of the worst flooding we have ever seen in the territory. We rose to the occasion. We launched the largest flood mitigation in Yukon history. Mr. Speaker, we are well prepared for this year. We have all of the knowledge that we gained last year, and we're not letting that slide. We're not sitting on our hands and not taking all the lessons learned from last year and not applying them. That's not the way this government works.

So, we have listened, we have evaluated what happened last year, and we are preparing for the worst this year, even as we hope for the best.

Last week on Friday, as I said, we had an officials meeting where we heard the concerns from all municipalities, and we're going to address those concerns as we go forward.

You are absolutely right. We do have a lot of snow throughout the Yukon this year. We're doing flood mapping in every Yukon community, Mr. Speaker. That's not something that we have done before. We're going to continue to work to make sure our communities are safe, just like we did last year.

**Mr. Hassard:** So, I guess there are no answers for the folks in Mayo either. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking about permanent solutions so that we don't have to go through this every time we get stuck in this situation.

Now, the survey data from last week makes it clear that Teslin is also at risk, with 42 percent more precipitation than normal. As we saw last year, the community of Teslin faces flooding a lot earlier in the season compared to other regions. This means that it's important for the government to take steps to engage with the community earlier.

So, will the government commit to engaging with the Village of Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council early enough that measures can actually be put in place before potential flooding begins and help the community with long-term solutions rather than one-off emergency repairs?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe it was just last Friday that the department met with all communities to discuss exactly this. Again, I want to commend the minister responsible for his work last year and again for his preparedness this year as well, working with all communities.

Last year, more than 200 people from across the Yukon government, as well as flood specialists from Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and approximately 100 members of Canadian Armed Forces, were actively engaged in flood responses and mitigation. Last year, not one single residential property was lost. It was very inspiring to see families and to see organizations all coming together to support Yukoners in the time of need.

Our government is actively monitoring the situation — the snowpack and the precipitation as well. We have already engaged with impacted residents, and we will continue to do so — up until even Friday of last week.

This budget contains \$3.7 million for flood remediation and recovery. Also, the Department of Community Services has a lot of regular meetings with their liaison officers and their minister and with communities, First Nation governments, and also the municipalities. We will continue that good work as we prepare for this year's season.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### **Bill No. 14: *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)* — Second Reading**

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 14, *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I move that Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am pleased to bring forward the *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)* for second reading today.

Our government is committed to modernizing Yukon's legislation so that it works for Yukoners and Yukon organizations. I am delighted that we are honouring this commitment to Yukoners through an update to the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*.

I am pleased to introduce the proposed amendment to the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*. Currently, narrow language in a provision of the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* is causing administrative difficulties for the Law Society of Yukon and ultimately then for Yukoners.

To remedy this issue, the Department of Justice is proposing the following amendment to the act: The proposal is to amend language in subsection 151(2)(a) to ensure that out-of-territory corporations that incorporated in another Canadian jurisdiction but that are registered and in good standing in the Yukon may be permitted to provide legal services here in the territory.

We are also proposing to amend the naming requirement provision in the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* to allow the Law Society of Yukon to issue permits to out-of-territory corporations. This change is required to allow the society to resume the permitting of corporations that are incorporated in other Canadian jurisdictions. The current inability to do so creates access to services and access to justice ramifications for Yukoners.

The proposed amendment will allow the Law Society of Yukon to fully implement their new legislation as was originally intended. The amendment before us today is necessary to support the Law Society of Yukon's policy objectives and, more importantly, the public interest.

Our government is very proud to bring forward this important legislative amendment to improve the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*.

**Mr. Cathers:** I won't be long in speaking to this. This legislation is correcting an error that government made in previous legislation that they brought forward. I understand that this was brought forward by the law society, so we don't have any concerns with this proposal.

**Ms. Blake:** I rise to indicate support for the amendments to be made.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I appreciate that the member opposite feels it necessary to characterize this as correcting an error. In fact, it is correcting a situation where the wording does not support the way in which the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* was intended to be used in relation to corporations. I don't have any trouble with that. In fact, I am happy to bring forward this

amendment so that this legislation will be improved and in its best form to serve Yukoners.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 14 agreed to*

### Bill No. 15: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022* — Second Reading

**Clerk:** Second Reading, Bill No. 15, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I'm pleased to be able to speak today about our government's proposed *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*.

As many members of this House will know, miscellaneous statute acts are used for housekeeping changes to legislation. This can include fixing numbering errors or language errors or inconsistencies, such as where one word is used interchangeably with another in an act and needs fixing or clarifying for consistency. It might also mean amending incorrect references to other acts or fixing consequential legislative change emissions or other such technical changes, including renaming an organization that has changed its name as we see in this piece of legislation.

In the fall of last year, the Department of Justice placed a call-out for amendments asking that any small amendments that met the test noted — that I have mentioned, noted above — for inclusion in the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*. This call, together with items that had already been identified by the legislative counsel office that are in need of being corrected in legislation make up the contents of this amending act, which is Bill No. 15.

This kind of legislation is introduced periodically as resources are available, and some members may be aware that there is often corresponding or sometimes a corresponding process for regulations.

Since the changes are not of a policy nature, the Minister of Justice is the minister who brings these kinds of bills forward on behalf of the government. It is my responsibility to ensure accuracy of legislation on behalf of the Government of Yukon. It is my pleasure to bring forward this bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

I look forward to providing more details about the amendments that are being suggested here and answering any questions that the members may have during Committee of the Whole.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, this is all minor housekeeping. It's interesting that the government chose to prioritize this instead of getting into departments or legislation where there are many questions that we would ask on behalf of Yukoners. This is minor housekeeping and correction of errors.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for bringing this forward and thank those folks who had to go through the legislation to find these spelling mistakes. It is a reminder to us in this House that when they come through, we have that opportunity. Knowing that we've missed ours, adding "nurturing" and added "register" instead of "registrar" is a testament to someone's proofreading skills that they were caught and brought forward. We look forward to a quick debate on this and moving it along.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I too agree that the individuals who not only work with this legislation every day, but draft it when the policy work is done and it's being brought forward to achieve many options for Yukoners are a separate breed and those who must be thanked — in particular, I am going to note that, in the last two years, we have asked an extraordinary amount of the diligent individuals at the legislative counsel office because, in addition to all the regular work that is of government and on behalf of Yukoners, they have had the responsibility of drafting orders under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and other directives that have been required under the *Public Health and Safety Act* as well and have been required for the purpose of the emergency that has been COVID-19.

I say “has been” very carefully. It is certainly continuing, but it is incredibly important that I take this opportunity, as has been noted by the member opposite, to note that their work is extraordinary and that getting to these kinds of clarifications is just as important and as hard work as all of the work they do, although probably a little bit less exciting. We are very pleased to present Bill No. 15 so that their work can be as accurate as possible.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

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

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 15 agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act 2017, (2022)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

### Recess

**Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger):** Order, please. I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

### Bill No. 14: Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)

**Deputy Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 14, *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would like to first take a moment to welcome Will Steinburg and Andrea Bailey, who are here from the Department of Justice to support me this afternoon, if there are any particularly technical questions. I appreciate them being here. They both worked on this legislation and actually the next piece of legislation that we will be discussing as well. I would like to thank them for being here.

In my earlier remarks, I reviewed the proposed change that is being requested with this bill to amend the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*, which we are taking into Committee today. It is a testament to our government’s commitment to working with our partners to improve access to justice for Yukoners.

Through the proposed amendment, we continue to ensure that Yukon’s legal professionals are well-supported by the modern legislation and a regulatory regime. The amendment supports the healthy operation necessary for the Law Society of Yukon to process and ensure access to legal services for the Yukon public.

The *Legal Profession Act, 2017* received assent in 2017 and came into force on February 6, 2020 after the associated regulations and the Law Society of Yukon’s updated rules were prepared and approved. The *Legal Profession Act, 2017* is intended to support the increased mobility of legal professionals and to take into account the prevalence of legal service providers who are incorporated here in the Yukon and elsewhere in Canada.

The folks who support me here today are probably way too young to know that I worked on the original mobility agreement for Yukon lawyers to be included — in particular, lawyers in the north to be included in the mobility agreement of the law societies across the country. It was really a truly inspiring opportunity, and it was fantastic because we needed to protect the law societies in the north as well as provide services and mobility for lawyers across the country. We did that by having a northern solution.

As currently drafted, some language in the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* is causing administrative issues with regard to the permitting of out-of-territory corporations that provide, or intend to provide, legal services in the Yukon Territory.

With this context in mind, through Bill No. 14, we are specifically proposing to amend the relevant provisions of the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* that will, first, amend the language

in paragraph 151(2)(a) to ensure that out-of-territory corporations that are incorporated in other Canadian jurisdictions that are registered in the Yukon may be licensed to provide legal services in the territory. This provision will amend the naming requirement provision in the *Legal Profession Act, 2017* to allow the Law Society of Yukon to issue permits to out-of-territory corporations.

While the society's executives were given broad rule-making powers under the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*, in order to self-regulate the legal profession in the Yukon Territory, it is the view of the Law Society of Yukon and the Department of Justice that a legislative amendment is required here.

It is important to note that the Law Society of Yukon currently has 475 members, 300 of whom are non-resident members. A substantial percentage of these non-resident members operate as professional corporations in their home jurisdictions. Registration as a corporation here in the Yukon by non-resident members cannot be accomplished without the proposed legislative amendment. For all of these reasons and to ensure that we continue to fulfill the Government of Yukon's commitment to improving access to justice, this legislative change is required.

I am pleased to present the proposed amendment to the *Legal Profession Act, 2017*, and I look forward to questions and further discussion from the members of this House.

**Deputy Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*?

Seeing none, we will proceed to clause-by-clause debate.

*On Clause 1*

*Clause 1 agreed to*

*On Clause 2*

*Clause 2 agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, without amendment.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that the Chair report Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Deputy Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

**Bill No. 15: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022***

**Deputy Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would like to welcome back Will Steinburg from the Policy branch at the Department of Justice. As well, joining him is Andrea Bailey who is a legislative drafter in our legislative counsel office. Thank you to both of them for joining me today.

I won't be long, but I think that it is important to speak just briefly about what is before us today. I would like to thank my colleagues here for the opportunity to stand. In my earlier remarks, I discussed the need for a new miscellaneous statute legislation and how this bill will correct errors or issues across several pieces of Yukon legislation. I will just quickly remind members that miscellaneous statute acts are used for housekeeping changes to legislation, such as fixing numbering errors, language errors, or inconsistencies, or in the case of a couple of these provisions in this particular legislation, changing the name of an organization. This might include amendments to where one word is used interchangeably with another, or there may be a need for making something consistent or references to other acts that are not correct. Another example includes a consequential legislative change.

I am pleased to discuss Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Amendment Act, 2022*, with members today as it aligns with our priority to set a balanced legislative agenda that considers political priorities and legislative drafting capacity and the importance of making laws accurate. As the changes are not of a policy nature, as the Minister of Justice, I get to bring this bill and bills of this kind forward on behalf of the government. It is my responsibility to do that and my pleasure to do so today.

It is important for me to note that none of the provisions being discussed today will affect spending of public funds, changes of any person's rights as set out in Yukon laws, or create any new offences.

I will also note that this latest version of the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022* is small and amends 25 Yukon acts.

At this time, I would like to just speak a little bit more about the details of what the bill is proposing.

Likely the most notable change through the bill is the replacement of the text "Agreement on Internal Trade" with the text "Canadian Free Trade Agreement" across a number of acts, including the *Chartered Professional Accountants Act*, the *Chiropractors Act*, the *Dental Profession Act*, and the *Judicature Act* and the *Optometrist Act*.

This specific change in terminology comes from the recent replacement of the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States with a new, updated version of the international agreement.

Another notable terminology revision is the update of the name change from “Yukon Teachers’ Association” to, quote: “Yukon Association of Education Professionals”. This is found in the *Education Act*, the *Education Labour Relations Act*, and the *Teaching Profession Act*.

Other revisions to legislation in this bill include updates to outdated references or incorrect references, such as within the *Coroners Act*, the *Land Titles Act, 2015*, the *Motor Vehicles Act*, the *Notaries Act*, and the *Societies Act*. These are also minor in nature, such as updating the reference to the “*Legal Profession Act*” to be replaced with “*Legal Profession Act, 2017*”.

Most of the remaining amendments that I have not touched on that are proposed in this bill include minor corrections of typos, such as correcting the spelling of “Royal Canadian Mountain Police” within the *Animal Protection Act* or with correcting the spelling of “necessities” within the *Children’s Law Act*.

Finally, other amendments include the addition of a missing preposition or the removal of unnecessary words to provide further clarity within legislation. An example of this includes adding the missing preposition “by” to a provision in subsection 6(2) of the *Civil Emergency Measures Act*.

As members can see, these amendments are minor and editorial in nature and seek to correct errors within several pieces of legislation.

I am pleased to bring forward a bill of this nature in order to amend these 25 Yukon acts and to provide more clarity for Yukoners. I look forward to the comments and questions.

**Deputy Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*?

**Ms. White:** Just before we move through, congratulations to the two staff members here because, through you, we will have passed two of the quickest pieces of legislation in the history of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

I do really appreciate the care that would have had to go into this. As I was saying off-mic before, as a product of French immersion, I spell terribly in both languages. Some of this would have been stuff that I would have done, such as missing the “s” in “transfer” or “register” instead of “registrar”.

I appreciate that someone had to go through all of these 25 pieces of legislation with a fine-tooth comb. Congratulations to the two officials here for what will be a record passing of this bill.

**Deputy Chair:** Is there any further debate on Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*?

Seeing none, we will now proceed to 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. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, read and agreed to.

### **Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 15 read and agreed to**

**Deputy Chair:** It has been requested by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, there is unanimous consent that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, be read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Clauses 1 to 25 deemed read and agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, without amendment.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that the Chair report Bill No. 15, *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Deputy Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

### **Bill No. 12: Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022) — continued**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*.

Is there any further general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe I have 13 seconds left, so what I will do is cede the floor to the member opposite. I will reserve the opportunity to complete my notes when I rise to my feet again.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Madam Chair, we will get into the back-and-forth debate. I just wanted to finish my notes here. We were talking about the fact that refundable tax credits are Yukon government expenditures programs paid through the tax system for administrative efficiency, so it would not be appropriate to deduct those amounts credited from the amount of tax shared with the Yukon First Nation governments. That’s where I left off last week.

Just continuing on that, unfortunately, the amendments to section 12 did not provide the legal certainty that we had intended to convey to CRA for their administrative purposes.

Today we return with a newly proposed version of subsection 12(1) that will be retroactive to the day initially indicated in the *Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2020*.

These proposed changes will not have any impact on the total amount of tax payable by Yukon citizens. It is purely an administrative correction and provides the necessary clarifications for implementation by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Moving along in the bill, I would like to now discuss the amendment to section 21.

Earlier on in the pandemic, in order to provide COVID-19 relief, subsections 153(1.02) to 153(1.04) were added to the federal *Income Tax Act* to provide eligible small employers with a temporary wage subsidy for a period of three months, from March 18, 2020 to June 19, 2020. Section 21 of our act would be retroactively amended to March 25, 2020 to include the temporary wage subsidy related to those sections that I just listed out of the federal *Income Tax Act*.

As you may have noticed, by the effective date of March 25, 2020, this temporary wage subsidy was one of the first forms of business relief in Canada. It allowed eligible businesses to retain the payroll withholdings that would normally be remitted shortly after the pay period to the federal government. It was a quick and efficient manner to provide liquidity in those early and very uncertain days of the pandemic. These proposed changes of Bill No. 12, our *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, ensure that Yukon businesses that benefited from this federal program are not considered offside with respect to the portions of remittances that they received.

So, the amendment to section 28, entitled “Application of federal provisions returns, payments and interests”, simply deletes a reference to the repealed federal act paragraph — specifically paragraph 104(23)(e).

Next, the amendment to section 52 is simply a correction to a reference in the federal act. Section 52 revolves around the application of federal provisions related to inspection, privilege, information return, and corporate execution. Since section 52 was written, the federal act has been expanded to include sections 231.6, 231.7, and 231.8, which are not covered by our current language.

The proposed amendment in section 52 fulfills our obligation to Canada to align our act with theirs.

We are now moving on to section 57, which is being amended based on a legal review of all provinces’ and territories’ income tax acts with respect to data sharing between the CRA and Finance Canada. As a result of advice that we received from CRA legal services, the CRA stopped sharing information relating to provincial tax programs with Finance Canada, and Finance Canada has asked the provincial and territorial governments to amend their acts to allow the CRA to share this information with Finance Canada solely for the formulation and evaluation of fiscal policy.

The CRA already shares the vast majority of tax information with Finance Canada since most tax information is collected by virtue of the federal *Income Tax Act*. This limited amendment will allow CRA to share tax information that is

collected by virtue of the Yukon *Income Tax Act*. An example would be information pertaining to the Yukon child fitness tax credit, which is provided under the Yukon *Income Tax Act*.

Next, we are proposing to amend section 60, which is the information and evidence section. The world has gone digital over the last few decades, and it sometimes takes a while for government agencies to adapt to these changes. The federal act was recently amended to allow CRA to deliver notifications to a bank or a credit union electronically where appropriate. This amendment, required by our tax collection agreement, aligns our act with this new process.

This brings us to the final amendment of the bill and possibly the easiest amendment to explain. Over the last few years, we have made a concerted effort to remove gender language from acts when there is no specific reason to have gender language. We have done a very good job of this in this regard, but we are not perfect. There are two remaining gender references in section 62 of this act. This proposed amendment corrects those instances. These amendments are important to ensure that all Yukoners see themselves reflected in the laws of government, regardless of their gender.

That concludes my description of all of the proposed amendments on the bill. I appreciate that, while the *Income Tax Act* is written as a series of basic, simple, logical expressions — Boolean logic expressions — it may appear convoluted to infrequent readers of the act or to those less familiar with the tax legislation. Matters of administration, compliance, and enforcement, especially related to taxes, may not be front of mind for too many people.

I would like to remind everyone, however, that the *Income Tax Act* generates in the neighbourhood of \$100 million annually for the territory. At times, it can be a complicated act, but we have obligations both to Canadians and also to our taxpayers to ensure that it stays current and effective in matters of administration, while also ensuring that our legislation remains fair and sustainable for taxpayers and remains up to date.

I would like to finish where I started by talking about the pandemic. The changes that we are making here in Bill No. 12 with respect to business investment tax credits are just some of the many initiatives that are undertaken to support the local economy.

While it may not appear as glamorous or as straightforward as direct loans, grants, or fee waivers, we are proud of these changes and of all of our initiatives over the last two years that have helped local businesses, workers, and individuals throughout the pandemic.

Finally, I would just like to thank the officials in both the Department of Justice and the Department of Finance who have put together these amendments.

At this point, I welcome any questions, and I will do my best to answer them as clearly as possible.

**Ms. White:** Just for anyone who hasn’t had the ability to have a briefing from the tax legend himself in the Assembly, it is those briefings that make this so much more clear. As the Premier pointed out, unless you’re steeped in tax law, it can be complicated.



One of the things that I would just like to thank our official for — and, of course, the Department of Finance — is that, when we were given the initial briefing, we were given it side by side, so we had the old part of the act and then the changes for the new act and what that would explain. I might just put out a pitch that, if that were publicly available somewhere, someone could actually go through and make those comparisons — only because the language that we are changing really makes sure that we are meeting our obligations with the Government of Canada. But those side-by-side comparisons make it really easy to understand why those are being made.

Just not to embarrass myself, I don't have specific questions mostly because of those briefings. I would say that I really thank the department and the officials, and especially the official joining us today, because it was through their level of understanding and professionalism that they were able to make it so clear — and not have a bunch of questions being asked in a way that didn't do the changes justice. Thank you for those briefings, of course.

**Chair:** Is there any further debate on Bill No. 12, *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*?

Seeing none, we will now proceed to 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. 12, *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, read and agreed to.

#### **Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 12 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. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, read and agreed to

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Clauses 1 to 13 deemed read and agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Before I move this, I would like to again thank Clarke LaPrairie for showing up. I think that there is going to be a new expense in Finance and a new title under his door, something about being a legendary guru or something. We will make sure that we make the adjustment and change to his title.

With that, Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, without amendment.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Chair report Bill No. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

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. 205: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23***

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am pleased to rise in Committee of the Whole to speak to Bill No. 205, otherwise known as the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*. I am joined today by my deputy minister, Scott Thompson.

If passed, this bill will provide spending authority for the first two months of the fiscal year. Members will be familiar with this bill as it includes funding that will ensure that the government has the necessary appropriations to fund the programs and services that Yukoners expect and rely on as we debate the main estimates.

As with previous years, the 2022-23 interim supply bill will grant spending authority to departments for the months of April and May while this process is underway. The total value of the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23* is approximately \$410.7 million. This includes \$321.1 million in operation and maintenance spending, and there is \$89.6 million in capital spending. This interim supply bill provides critical operational funding in order to allow departments to meet their financial obligations at the start of each fiscal year. The bill ensures that government services will continue and that employees, Yukon businesses, and government contractors continue to get paid until the 2022-23 main estimates receive assent.

The majority of the funding includes one-sixth of the forecasted budget, as well as large payments due early in the fiscal year for items such as the comprehensive municipal grants, the Yukon Hospital Corporation contribution agreement, Yukon University's contribution agreement, and COVID expenses for critical supports needed at the start of the fiscal year.

Yukon's comprehensive municipal grants are paid out on April 1 of each year. This bill will ensure that organizations, corporations, and other levels of governments will have the money that they need to fund their operations. It also includes funding for the universal childcare and money to fund Yukon's schools for the first two months of the fiscal year.

I would be pleased to provide members with an overview of what is included from the numbers perspective.

I mentioned legislative grants. This year's interim supply bill includes \$37.4 million in that area, the largest of which includes \$21.1 million for the comprehensive municipal grant. The amount of \$10.3 million is there for grants in lieu of taxes for municipalities, \$840,000 for post-secondary student grants and childcare subsidies, and \$3.7 million for social assistance payments.

Now, beyond these grants, contribution agreements to the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon University make up \$41.1 million and \$7.3 million respectively.

Non-governmental organizations also depend on these payments to continue their operations without interruption. Under Health and Social Services, this bill will also include one-quarter of the grants and contribution agreements with NGOs, as well as a further \$8.4 million in funding to meet capacity for managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is also \$8.5 million, or one-quarter of the RCMP and 911 contract values, included in the interim supply bill.

Lastly, there is \$9.5 million included in this bill as part of funding for universal childcare and \$13 million to meet agreements, purchases, and contracts in Yukon schools.

This is just a snapshot of some of the bigger ticket items that are included in the interim supply bill and may fall outside that one-sixth allocation.

The remaining amounts are largely operational and fall under a standard two-month distribution of funds.

As we expect the *First Appropriation Act 2022-23* to receive assent by the end of the session, we will provide spending authority for the full year at that time. While I welcome questions related to the interim supply bill, I hope that members can keep their questions about the *First Appropriation Act 2022-23* to that debate.

Passing this interim supply bill definitely helps to ensure that services are still provided to Yukoners while we have that comprehensive and fruitful discussion.

**Mr. Cathers:** I'm going to keep it brief here today in the interest of getting on to other items and will save additional questions for debate on the budget itself rather than on interim supply.

**Ms. White:** As I said in our second reading speeches, I appreciate the importance of government being able to do the work that they do running the programs and making sure that the public servants who do that work are able to be paid, and that's an important part.

I also mentioned that it is 21 percent of the budget and that it's set for that two-month span. Again, that was through the excellent briefing of the Deputy Minister of Finance who is joining us today.

But making clear that this is to make sure that the business of making the lights turn on and the doors open continues — I look forward to further questions in general debate on the budget as a whole.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 205, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*?

Seeing none, we will proceed to 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, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*, read and agreed to.

**Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 205 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, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Clauses 1 and 2, and Schedules A and B, deemed read and agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*, without amendment.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Chair report Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 3, entitled *Act to Amend the Assessment and Taxation Act and the Municipal Act (2021)*.

**Chair:** 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. 3: Act to Amend the Assessment and Taxation Act and the Municipal Act (2021)**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 3, entitled *Act to Amend the Assessment and Taxation Act and the Municipal Act (2021)*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I would like to begin by thanking each of the members who rose to speak on Bill No. 3, entitled *Act to Amend the Assessment and Taxation Act and the Municipal Act (2021)*, in the fall of 2021. Between sessions, representatives from the Association of Yukon Communities and Yukon government worked intensely together to share their processes to levy, collect, and remit taxes, examine differences, and look for efficiencies.

Municipalities support the climate-saving intent of this program and came to the table in the spirit of partnership. As partners, municipalities are willing to take on an additional workload and absorb some of the associated costs; however,

they cannot shift the entire burden to municipal taxpayers. This is something that I heard in my community tour last year. It is something that my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, heard as well on his comprehensive tours of the communities.

The working group brought forward recommendations to the oversight committee of elected officials that the Yukon government and participating municipalities share the program costs that municipalities could incur. The Association of Yukon Communities unanimously endorsed a funding model to offset a portion of the administrative costs. Provided the legislation before us today is passed, the departments will work together to determine budget needs for the program and implementation details to build the program, in addition to drafting regulation and working with municipal partners on bilateral program agreements.

As for the legislation before us, taking action against climate change is imperative. The *Our Clean Future* strategy sets out tangible, achievable goals to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Because 121 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were produced from heating homes and buildings across the territory in 2019, we know that changes to homes and businesses will have a big impact. The purpose of this bill is to make changes to the *Assessment and Taxation Act* and the *Municipal Act* that will enable the creation of an energy-efficiency retrofit program through which Yukoners have access to funding repayable through an annual local improvement tax.

The amendments in this bill will enable the government to regulate a retrofit program, recover the funds through the local improvement tax process, and enter into agreements with municipalities to levy and collect the tax and remit it to the Government of Yukon.

Retrofits such as smart electric heating systems and biomass heating in commercial buildings will reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while saving Yukoners money on utility bills.

But these types of changes to existing buildings are expensive. While the changes will add value to buildings and result in a more comfortable and more efficient home and business, the upfront investment in technology, labour, and materials is not immediately offset by monthly annual or energy cost-savings. Amending the *Assessment and Taxation Act* will expand the definition of “local improvement” to include energy retrofits in order to enable a new program. It will authorize the Commissioner in Executive Council to make regulations and allow the program elements and processes to be set in regulation.

The act clarifies that the minister has the authority to construct and fund local improvements outside of municipalities, but where municipalities are involved, the act ensures that a bylaw is not required for the levying of a tax for these items, that money owed by a property owner under this program becomes a tax on the property, and that municipal taxes are paid before the local improvement tax.

Amending the *Municipal Act* will introduce the retrofitting program, define retrofits for energy saving, and enable the

Government of Yukon to work with municipalities to make this program available within their municipalities. Because a municipality is the taxing authority for property contained within it, this local improvement program can only be undertaken when the municipality has agreed to levy, collect, and remit the tax to the Yukon government.

The new division includes the Government of Yukon’s responsibility to calculate the amount to levy, sets deadlines to provide information to the municipality, and specifies a municipality’s authority and obligation to collect and remit the tax. Some housekeeping to correct an error and remove a repealed item will also occur.

We heard in the working group discussions that municipalities found the remittance deadline too tight. We heard that in the House just last fall. The Yukon government agreed, and I will be tabling an amendment to the bill during line-by-line debate to extend the remittance deadline from 15 days to 91 days. Last fall, we weren’t sure if Community Services and Justice could actually do this work on such a tight deadline, but they actually really did an amazing amount of work and got this revision before us just recently. I’m more than happy to talk about it today.

With these amendments, enabling an energy-efficiency retrofit program to operate the program regulation policies can be developed.

Madam Chair, this moves the Government of Yukon another step closer to completing the actions to mitigate climate change outlined in *Our Clean Future*.

That’s all I have for my opening remarks. I look forward to questions.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise in Committee today and speak to this.

Obviously, the path to getting here to Committee was a bit unusual, relative to previous bills, as it was tabled in the fall, passed at second reading, but then set aside and not called in the Fall Sitting, while the government undertook the work that the minister has referenced with AYC and with municipalities. Obviously, we have a number of questions about the work that went into that. It is interesting to hear from the minister in his opening remarks that there is an amendment coming from the minister. So, we will see the minister amend the bill that he tabled last year, ostensibly to improve it, but I am sure that when the amendment itself comes at line-by-line debate, we will have a chance to debate it more thoroughly.

To begin today, I would like to ask a few questions about exactly the work that has been done. When we left off in the fall, there was a commitment from the minister to the Third Party to do some work in exchange for the support from the Third Party at second reading, which allowed the bill to stay alive and on the Order Paper, so I was wondering if the minister can explain his understanding of what the threshold is for achieving that support and if he could explain the work that has happened so far to achieve that with the AYC and with municipalities. So far, I don’t think that we have seen anything publicly come out of municipalities or the AYC, and so I am interested to hear what the minister views as an acceptable level of support from the AYC and municipalities or any of those

individual councillors or mayors. As we know, in the last Sitting, there was sort of a battle of tabling documents where there were a number of letters tabled from various municipalities expressing support or concern with the program. As my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin reminds me, there was more concern than support at that time.

I am wondering what we should look to in order to understand whether or not support has been achieved. Is there a letter that we can expect from the AYC or are there motions that have been passed by municipalities? What does the minister understand to be the threshold needed to achieve support for this bill today, and has he achieved that?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition this afternoon. When we left off last fall, my good colleague from the Third Party had asked that I demonstrate a good working relationship with municipalities. We struck a working group with municipalities that started to meet in early January. They met several times — I believe at least seven times — in the intervening weeks to go through the proposal and to work out costs. The working group came up with a report, which I believe exceeded 70 pages in length. It went through all of the potential interactions that a municipality might be able to see in a worst-case scenario for one of these applications.

They worked out a recommendation for us to deal with the workload. Like they said, they wanted to make sure that they were adequately compensated for that. They agreed to share some of the compensation with the Yukon government in a spirit of collegiality. We received the document at a leadership level of leaders within the Association of Yukon Communities who then reviewed the document and approved it. It went back to the Association of Yukon Communities two weeks ago. The association voted on the recommendations as presented by the working group and approved by the leadership group and unanimously supported the recommendation and the recommended approach to compensate municipalities for their work on this program.

I believe that this met the threshold of the arrangement we had with the Third Party, so we are very happy that we were able to really work so well together in the spirit of cooperation to deal with the climate emergency that so many municipalities have declared, as has the Yukon government. That's where we sit right now. We have a motion that was passed by the Association of Yukon Communities a couple of weeks ago at their meeting, which was just held. It was dated March 7: "The Association of Yukon Communities (AYC) board of directors met on March 5, 2022 and the following motion was carried: Motion BD22-06 THAT the Association of Yukon Communities endorses the recommendations of the Better Building Program Working Group and Oversight committees. Carried Unanimously. The AYC looks forward to written confirmation from your office regarding the final recommendations of the working group." We are drafting that up. That is from Gord Curran, the president of the Association of Yukon Communities.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that and I appreciate the minister's response. I haven't seen that motion, so his reading

of it today is the first I had heard of it, but one thing I did note is that the motion appeared to me to be conditional on the government's acceptance of the recommendations of the working group.

My question is whether or not the bill, in its current form — or perhaps the bill as it will be amended by the minister as he indicated in his opening remarks — reflects and accepts all of the recommendations made by the working group and therefore fulfills the requirement of the motion that was passed by the AYC on March 5.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

So, just to go back over the working group, the working group included representation from the City of Whitehorse, Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Dawson City, the Association of Yukon Communities, as well as Yukon government participants from Community Affairs, Property Assessment Taxation, and the Energy branch. The working group met six times in January and February 2022. I believe that there was a seventh meeting after we reviewed the recommendations. The oversight committee consisted of the mayors of the City of Whitehorse, Dawson City, and Watson Lake and the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the two departments in the Yukon government that will be overseeing the program. The oversight committee met three times in the same period to provide direction and to discuss the recommendations.

The working group identified that the introduction of the better building program will add volume and/or complexity to the existing municipal tax processes, as we discussed last session. The working group examined what is proposed for the program and what could be adjusted. We found out that the one-time administration fee of \$500, based on the domestic water well program, was inadequate. I had heard that in my community meetings as well as from municipalities last fall, especially for a debt-collection process that could span 15 years.

Municipalities represented on the working group analyzed their taxation processes and determined that better buildings would create eight to 10 hours of new work per project. That is the estimate that came out through the forensic — I would almost call it a "forensic analysis" — of the processes and interactions with the public that this might generate at the municipal level.

As I said, as partners in the program, municipalities were willing to absorb some of those costs but not all of them. We saw that, and we actually agreed as a group to test these assumptions — to actually do an audit of what the actual costs were after two years of project administration. So, we are going to come back to this in a little while and have another look at it to make sure that they are getting compensated adequately for the program that they are implementing on our behalf.

All parties agreed that the price to administer the program is meant to offset costs and is not a revenue stream, so we came to an agreement per file, and then we agreed that this was not to actually bring revenue into the municipality but would just cover the costs of administering the program.

So, in answer to the member opposite's question, nothing in the legislation needs to change to address the recommendations of the working group that the AYC put together, other than the time frame. We heard last fall that municipalities were concerned that having to remit payment to the Yukon government in early July was just too onerous a time frame to meet on behalf of the municipalities.

At the time last fall, I committed to looking at ways we might be able to bring an amendment forward that would provide more time. I wasn't sure at the time whether Community Services and Justice, given the incredible workload that they have been under through the pandemic, would be able to do that, but I put it to them. Justice and Community Services rose to the challenge and actually got that amendment in place. The amendment that will be proposed today will give municipalities that additional time they asked for last fall so they can remit the money to the Yukon government and have a little bit more time and not meet such a hard deadline.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's thoroughness in his answer. However, just to be clear, I would like to step back. I appreciate that he has begun to explain some of the timelines, fees and such, and the financial details of the program.

Before we get there, though, I just want to understand a little bit more about the process.

The minister has referenced two separate committees — one oversight committee and one working group. I'm wondering if he can start by telling us who was on the oversight committee and what their terms of reference were and then explain who was on the working group and what their terms of reference were.

I'm aware of the working group from the letter that he tabled on November 21 last fall, but at that point, the committee had not been struck and the terms of reference had not been achieved.

So, to begin, can the minister let us know the names and positions of the individuals on those committees and what their roles were?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The terms of reference for the better building program oversight committee and working group were assigned and approved on January 11, 2022. It provides some background that just shows that the Government of Yukon committed to consulting with municipalities and the Association of Yukon Communities on regulations and implementation details for the better building program in advance of the legislation passing in the spring of 2022. The oversight committee and working group are short-term entities made up of municipal Association of Yukon Communities and Government of Yukon representatives. The purpose of the oversight committee is to determine the scope of discussion based on proposed themes to provide overall direction and to endorse the agreement and recommendations developed by the working group.

The purpose of the working group is to develop recommendations and an opt-in agreement between the Government of Yukon and each participating municipal government that adequately addresses the administrative

workload and removes barriers to municipal participation in better buildings using the local improvement tax mechanism. The working group will examine what is proposed and what could be adjusted while adhering to the general objectives of the better building program and the themes and scope prescribed by the oversight committee.

Both committees should strive to find imaginative, novel, reasonable solutions that make the delivery of energy retrofits using the local improvement charge mechanism better while easing the administrative burden on municipalities. That was the direction. As I said, as of March 7, the Association of Yukon Communities' board of directors carried Motion BD22-06 — that the Association of Yukon Communities endorses the recommendations of the better building program working group and oversight committee.

The member opposite also asked for a list of folks who are on the committee. I will say that on the working group was the acting city manager of the City of Whitehorse, the CAO of Watson Lake, the CAO of Haines Junction, the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities, the director of Community Affairs for Community Services, the director of Policy for Community Services, the director of Property Assessment Taxation for Community Services, the manager of the Energy branch for Energy, Mines and Resources, and a policy analyst with Community Services.

There were other members added. The CAO of Dawson City was added due to an illness of another member, and the director of corporate services for the City of Whitehorse was also included on the committee.

On the oversight committee, it was the ministers of Community Services and of Energy, Mines and Resources, as I said, the Mayor of Whitehorse, the Mayor of Watson Lake, and a councillor in Haines Junction.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answers there very much. He has addressed the membership of the committee for sure.

Just one point of clarification — at the outset of his answer, he was reading what he had first described as the context of the working group. Can I just ask him for clarification? Was that just the context, or was that indeed the terms of reference that he was reading from? If it was not the terms of reference, is he able to simply table the terms of reference at some point? It doesn't have to be today, but perhaps in the coming days if he could table the terms of reference for the working group.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was just a contextual piece — the very first. Then I did go through and give the terms of reference piece as well. So, there were two components there. The first one was contextual. I just went into climate change. I didn't read the whole thing.

The second piece was the terms of reference, which actually contextualized what the working group was going to look at and come to agreement on. They did actually go through and drafted a report that, as I said, exceeded 70 pages. It was quite in depth. That formed the basis of our discussion and eventual agreement between the municipalities and the AYC and us. The AYC has endorsed that document.

I would be happy to table that document if I can get permission to. I will talk to my colleagues at the AYC and see what their thoughts are.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer there and the clarity around the context versus the terms of reference. I won't belabour it, but it would be great if he could table the terms of reference that the working group used.

The minister has also referenced a motion that was completed by the AYC executive on either March 5 or March 7 — I wasn't clear — but was that motion delivered to the minister by way of letter? If so, can the minister please table that letter?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Yes, it did — it was actually March 7. It did come as a letter from the president of the Association of Yukon Communities. I would be happy to table the letter.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer there and the commitment to table that. That would be very helpful.

Based on his reading of the motion that was shared with him, my understanding is that the AYC endorsed the recommendations that were made by the working group. So, the AYC hasn't endorsed the bill per se; they have endorsed the recommendations that the working group completed.

Can the minister tell us: Has he responded to the letter indicating that the government fully supports the recommendations that were made by the working group? Does the government support all of the recommendations that were made by the working group?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

So, yes, the government does certainly support the recommendations. That was what was communicated to the Association of Yukon Communities. We are in the process of responding formally to the AYC. I have communicated to them that we have accepted the recommendations as well, and that is why they went forward to their meeting. I have this letter now and am drafting a formal response to that letter.

However, I will say that the bill that we are currently discussing today enables the program. There are still some details to work out — certainly in the regulations. We have a draft regulation that I believe the committee has seen. We also have bilateral agreements because this is only an enabling program and enabling legislation. As I have said from the very outset of this discussion over this bill, it is up to every single municipality to decide whether this program is something that their community or their citizens would want, and they can then opt into the program. When they decide to do that, we will sit down with the municipality and, with each one, strike arrangements that meet their unique needs for their community. That is how the program will roll out.

What the passage of the bill will allow is for the Yukon government to provide the program to unincorporated communities outside of municipalities. So, Yukoners who live in rural settings can actually access the program and the tax authorities will be able to deliver the program that way.

Where the tax authority is a municipality, they have to represent their own needs and interests in those to their citizens.

I've said that on ATIPP and I've said that in other discussions we've had in this House. They are responsible governments in their own right, so I have every confidence that they will represent the interests of their citizens, as responsible governments, as they come forward and elect to opt into the program. There is no obligation for them to deliver the program if they decide it's not in their interest.

That's the basis of the discussions to come.

**Mr. Dixon:** I thank the minister for the answer.

So, the working group has produced recommendations. The AYC executive has passed a motion endorsing those recommendations. The president of the AYC has sent a letter to the minister explaining that motion endorsing the recommendations. But the minister indicated that he hasn't responded yet — or at least responded by letter yet — to the president of the AYC.

So, in some other way, has the minister communicated to the AYC that the government supports, agrees with, and is implementing the recommendations of the working group?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Absolutely. I responded to the e-mail that the president of the AYC sent to me informally and I also had a conversation with the president of the AYC — just at noon — to tell him that the bill was coming before the House potentially this week, that I appreciated the work that he and his group had done on the recommendations, and that we support them. He wished me well. He and I had a good talk this afternoon even, so we have had at least one conversation about that, as well as the informal acceptance of the letter that he sent to me.

**Chair:** I ask that members please speak up when asking questions or answering the questions. Thank you.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thanks to the minister for that explanation.

At this point, my understanding then would be that the AYC has received the minister's acceptance of the recommendations and therefore they presumably are then satisfied with the bill.

So, in order for us to understand the implementation of those recommendations and whether or not the bill really captures — or the program that will be developed captures — those recommendations, it's difficult for us to make that assessment without the recommendations themselves. I think the minister referenced this, but I'll ask again just for clarity.

Is the minister able to share with the Legislature the recommendations that the working group made? Is he able to table them or provide members with a copy of the report, either the lengthier report, which the minister has referenced, or any sort of shorter, abridged document?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I did say that I would that I would be happy to share the recommendations of the Association of Yukon Communities working group. I said that I would have to talk to the association itself before doing so. I made that commitment moments ago.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thanks to the minister for his commitment. I appreciate that he should check in with the AYC first. I understand that very much.

I will move on to the proposed structure of the program. My understanding from the minister's comments is that there

are two streams to the program; there is a residential and a commercial stream. Can the minister describe the difference between the two, and how each will work?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** So, there are two streams. The residential stream is available to homeowners. It includes thermal enclosure, insulation upgrades, improved ventilation, and new windows as well. Combined, these measures must surpass 20-percent energy improvement in home energy consumption as verified by the Energy branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, though I have made the commitment both to the Association of Yukon Communities and to others that in building this program, once the bill passes, we will be able to start to dive in and actually start building the program in finer detail. We are going to look to make sure that it is as inclusive as possible. We really want to make sure that people are improving their homes and that they are seeing savings in energy bills. We have been talking on the floor of the House for many days now about how those costs are rising. This is one tangible way that people can use to actually reduce their energy consumption, so we are going to make sure that it's as expansive as possible.

There is also a commercial stream, which includes retrofits for existing buildings that improve overall energy performance in the following categories: thermal enclosures, windows, insulation, and fuel switching to biomass and/or HVAC and/or recommissioning.

The main difference between the two intakes will be that the residential package is capped at \$50,000 for homes. It's \$100,000 for commercial properties. Commercial properties have a higher threshold. They are entitled to more money.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer. There was a lot there, so I just want to drill into some of the details to make sure that I have it right.

I will start with the residential program. The minister indicated that the maximum amount that would be available to a residential homeowner was 20 percent of the assessed value of the home. First of all, can the minister confirm that? Can we start with the minister confirming that it is 20 percent of the assessed value of the home?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

I will correct the record. It is 25 percent of the assessed value. The 20 percent that I referenced just earlier — 20-percent energy improvement in home energy consumption is what we are striving for. We are looking at that. We are going to see what the uptake is with that threshold, and if the uptake isn't there, we may be able to alter it in some way, shape, or form as we design the program. The initial goal is 20-percent energy consumption, and it is based on 25 percent of your assessed value.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the clarification from the minister. I believe that he also said that the amount would be capped at \$50,000. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** That is correct.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The work that the minister listed as being eligible included thermal enclosures, windows, and heat pumps, I believe. I may have missed some,

though, so can the minister repeat which types of work are eligible for this?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** At the moment, as I said, the program has not been fully designed yet because, of course, we don't have legislation yet to allow the program to proceed, but the broad strokes about the program are that it will be a thermal enclosure, so insulation upgrades, improved ventilation, and new windows as well. Those are the things that we are going to focus on to try to save 20 percent of their heating costs.

**Mr. Dixon:** Is 20 percent a target or a cap? So, a project is ineligible unless it reaches a 25-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or a 20-percent increase in efficiency — I am not sure which it was, but is it a cap or is it a floor? Is that something that the homeowner needs to be able to meet in order to be eligible, or is it just a target that they are using to guide their program development?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. The 20-percent threshold is a goal. We are looking to prioritize the retrofits. We have committed to trying to get 1,000 of these retrofits done.

We want to make sure that we get the best return on the investment that we're making. We're going to try to give priority to those retrofits that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions the most for the homeowner.

So, the 20 percent figure is a guide, but we want to have some sort of aspirational goal that will allow us to prioritize which projects we fund so that we get the biggest return on the investment. The goal here is to actually reduce the territory's greenhouse gas emissions and make the homeowner see tangible benefits from the improvements that they are making.

So, these are the aspirational goals of the program and that's what we're striving to do. We want to make sure we prioritize those projects that are going to see the biggest return on residential or commercial retrofits — that actually pay real benefits to the homeowner or the business involved and that actually reduce the territory's greenhouse gas emissions.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer.

I guess what I'm trying to understand is whether or not there is a minimum increase in energy efficiency that needs to be achieved in order to be eligible. The reason I ask that is that there is obviously a big difference between doing a complete thermal enclosure project and replacing a single window. I'm wondering if there is any minimum threshold — if one were to apply to have a single window upgraded from a single pane to a high-efficiency, triple pane window, would that be eligible, or is there a minimum threshold that the project needs to meet in order to be eligible?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** So, there is a front-end energy audit that is going to be done on people applying to the program. So, that is going to go through and we will go through your house and say, "If you do this, you will see these savings. These are the things that we're recommending you do."

We're going to strive — because we're looking for deep energy audits to make sure that this program actually results in meaningful change for Yukoners on both their heating bills as well as their greenhouse gas emissions in the territory. We are going to suggest, through these audits that we do, the things that

need to be done. If it came down to one window that needed to be replaced, we would probably direct that individual to one of our other programs that might be able to step in. This is for deeper, broader, and more meaningful — and the goal that we're trying to reach in the initial tranche of assessments is to hit 20 percent of energy savings for the homeowner as well as for our territorial reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer.

My question, I guess, speaks to sort of the target audience here or the target client here. Obviously, if the target is a 20-percent increase in energy efficiency, then obviously the goal here is targeting older homes, particularly, I would expect, those in rural Yukon, given the fact that, if you look at the homes in Whitehorse, a house built last year in Whistle Bend would probably struggle pretty mightily to reach a 20-percent increase with a single project like this. But for a house in rural Yukon — say in Watson Lake — that was built in the 1970s, a 20-percent increase would be more attainable.

So, I'm wondering if the minister can speak to the disparity between Whitehorse and the rest of the Yukon in terms of uptake in this program. It seems to me that the target is older homes and probably those in rural Yukon, but I would like the minister to explain that a little bit and whether or not that 20-percent increase is going to guide the program in a particular direction.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I want to say right off the hop that this isn't an urban/rural divide. As a matter of fact, my colleague and I have travelled through rural Yukon. We have spoken to municipalities throughout the territory. We have heard from mayors about the potential issues with assessed value. We have said to those mayors that we are going to assess the program criteria and try to accommodate, when we are dealing with these municipalities, their individual, unique needs. That is part of the beauty of the onboarding process. When municipalities decide to come on to the program, we will assess the needs of the program for the municipality.

I don't think that this program will be of much use to people who have bought homes in Whistle Bend or brand new homes in the territory because we are seeing a change in the territory to much more efficient homes and better building materials. More efficient homes — people are demanding it, so those are happening. The member is right that what we are seeing are homes in rural Yukon that are older and will need to be upgraded. We are also seeing those homes as well in Whitehorse — in Hillcrest, Valleyview, Crestview, and up in my neck of the woods in Granger and Logan. All of those places have homes — and some of the 30-year-old homes will have efficiencies that we will seek to improve through this program.

The program, again, seeks to get the best value for money. We do that by assessing the home and doing the best retrofits that we can to lower your heating costs and lower your greenhouse gas emissions on an individual basis. If we do this right, as I think I said earlier today, it's 121 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions that we are targeting at reducing. That is the goal of the program. It is not an urban/rural thing. It is certainly an older home issue. Some homes are not as efficient as they could be. We are seeking to put the money

where it can best be used to reduce the heating costs of Yukon residents and generate the best results as far as greenhouse gas emissions.

**Mr. Dixon:** Just so that I have the process understood, my understanding is that the first step that a prospective client would need to take would be to seek an energy audit. The energy audit would presumably come back with a list of proposed actions that could be taken to the house to make it more efficient.

To use my sort of thinking on that, it gives a menu of options to the homeowner. Does the homeowner then pick off the menu which aspects of energy retrofits they want to pursue and then apply, or does the government require all of the things identified in the energy audit, or a certain number of them, to be included in an application? So, yes, if the minister could explain how that would work.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am going to endeavour to provide an answer to the member opposite. I do appreciate the questions that he is providing this afternoon, but I will also preface my remarks by saying that we have not yet completely built this program, because frankly, we haven't got legislation through this House that allows the program to proceed. The good folks at Energy, Mines and Resources and at Community Services are not going to do all the work without having a bill through the House that they can actually do the work for.

We've got the outline of a program, but there are still details that need to be worked on, of course, because we don't have legislation. As soon as the legislation passes the House, then we will put pen to paper and actually start to figure out a lot of the details.

That said, Energy, Mines and Resources does a lot of energy work already, so this isn't new for them. The loan program is a little bit new. The delivery system is a little bit new, but they have experience in delivering these types of retrofit programs.

The member opposite is correct. There will be an energy audit. It will start a conversation with the homeowner who will get a list of actions that, if they take them, will save X amount of energy on the back end if they were to do it. If, in doing the actions — there may be 10 items on the list. If they do five of them, maybe they will make the 20-percent threshold. If they do one of them, they won't make the threshold and they may be passed over in favour of another applicant who actually is getting a lot closer to the 20 percent. We are going to prioritize those doing the most energy retrofits of the program.

We are looking to use the money to get the best return for homeowners and the best return in terms of our climate and the action plan. We will work with them. It's entirely up to the homeowner whether they want to opt into the program. If they want to get a loan, they want to make sure that they maximize their energy savings, but it is entirely up to the homeowner whether or not they proceed with the program and what they feel comfortable doing. That said, if they are doing one window, the assessors and the good folks at Energy, Mines and Resources will find other avenues for them to meet their goals — if it is not quite as intense of an energy saving or renovation as others on the block.



That sort of lays out in very broad terms how this program will resolve on the ground when the assessor does the work of looking at the properties in question.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's explanation.

What he said was that if a homeowner gets an audit and they decide to proceed with an application that is somewhat limited — say it only achieves a five-percent increase or they only want to proceed with certain upgrades or improvements to their home — they may — in his words, I believe — be passed over in favour of another applicant.

So, does that mean that there is a fixed number of spots per entry? If so, what is anticipated to be that limit on the number of applicants per tranche?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I want to be clear. The goal of this program is to get as much money toward major renovations of residential and commercial properties as we possibly can. There will be audits of the program. They will identify savings. The goal is to get as close to 20 percent per property as we possibly can in greenhouse gas savings. That's the goal.

The limit on the program will be, first of all, the program commitments, which is \$50,000 per residential upgrades and \$100,000 for commercial upgrades and the budget that we allocate per year of the program. The target over the 15 years will be close to \$40 million in loans and investment in greenhouse gas reductions throughout the territory. That's over 15 years.

On an annual basis, it will be, of course, less than that, but it will ramp up as the program hits — more municipalities sign on and more people start to take the program. It will be assessed after two years to see if, starting from a municipality level, the fees that we're paying to municipalities are covering the cost without a profit motive — just to cover the very cost of administering the program.

But it's not like — if you come in and you have the assessment done and they say that, if you fix that bay window, it will save two percent and they put in an application to fix the bay — that's not what this is for. There is a whole suite of energy retrofits that are offered by Yukon Housing Corporation and Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources. This is the latest component of that. If you are not meeting the threshold of 20 percent or close to it, we'll probably direct you to another avenue to actually get that done — maybe the Yukon Housing Corporation repair or grant program. Other programs will be leveraged. Other opportunities to fix those assets that you have will be brought in by the good folks administering the program.

But the goal is to save greenhouse gas emissions and get the best return on the property owner's investment and the government's investment to save money for your heating costs and to reduce the territory's greenhouse gas emissions. That is really what this program is about.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's answer, but I do seek a little more clarity because he said that this is not the program for changing a single bay window or achieving only a two-percent increase, but that the target is 20 percent. Ultimately, the government will have to write some sort of threshold into their policy to give guidance to those who are administering the program to accept an application or not.

I guess my question is: Will the 20-percent threshold that the minister has indicated as their target become a firm threshold that needs to be met in order for an application to be successful? If not, what will that threshold be? Or will there be discretion left to those administering the program to accept anything that they think is close enough to 20 percent to be reasonable? If so, that leaves a lot of discretion to someone administering the program. It would be useful to know whether or not there will be a firm threshold or if it will be left to discretion, and, if so, how much discretion will be left to program administrators?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, I can only take the questions — and they're good questions — from the member opposite this afternoon.

I have to commend his genuine interest and thirst for knowledge about this program, which is so important to the *Our Clean Future* document that we have brought before the territory. It is guiding our efforts to tackle climate change in the state of emergency that we declared.

What I will say is that he is looking for specifics about a program that doesn't have specifics attached to it. It has broad strokes, but in reality, until the legislation that is before us this afternoon passes, there is no program. The legislation enables the program. The legislation enables municipalities to sign on.

So, there are details that still need to be worked out in the coming months, once the legislation passes, as to how we actually meet the broad goals of this program, which is to provide a grant of up to \$50,000 to people who own residences and up to \$100,000 to people who own businesses to reduce their heating costs, the amount of fuel they burn, through improved energy retrofits and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that the territory is making.

The goal, as stated — we think that 20 percent is a good number to start with as an aspirational goal in designing this program, but when we go out and actually assess properties and see the uptake from the program, we will begin to see how many people can actually achieve the 20-percent goal — how many applicants are hitting 10 percent, maybe, or 15, 30, or 40 percent. We just don't know because this is a new program for the territory — brand new.

We have set an initial target of 20 percent saying that, if we can improve homes or businesses to save 20 percent of their heating costs or improve their homes or businesses by 20 percent, this is a real goal. When we do the assessments of these homes, we'll see what sort of targets and improvements can be identified in these homes to actually make the needed and necessary and much-vaunted improvements to the homes.

Now, I flagged earlier that in rural communities and smaller communities, the assessed tax value of the homes may actually be less in some of these communities and may require that, in the agreements that we strike with the municipalities — these individual and unique agreements with some of the municipalities — we have to reassess in some of these places how we actually deliver the program in their communities. I have said that to the mayors of these communities — that we are open to that negotiation to make sure this program meets

the needs of their communities. That is, again, something else that we will strive to do in our negotiations going forward.

As I said, I applaud the member opposite's thirst. This is an exciting program. I can only take his questions as sincere interest in a program that has yet to be firmly established. I look forward to providing more details on the program itself once we get the legislation through the Legislative Assembly and then start to look in technicolor at what the program delivery will look like in specifics.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's comments, but I should point out that it was the government's decision to bring this bill forward today to debate it. We had heard last fall a number of concerns about what the program that would come from this bill would look like. Now we're told that the AYC has provided some recommendations but that they are not able to be tabled or shared with us yet. The government has said that there are a number of things that this program will achieve in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reductions, but they can't tell us anything about the program yet. So, it makes it difficult for us to judge the government's actions here without the government having done some of this work.

So, things like understanding what the actual recommendations are, from the AYC to government, would have been extremely helpful. I think that the minister should quickly seek the approval of AYC to share those recommendations so that we as legislators can actually understand whether or not the commitments that the government has made have been met.

So, I appreciate that the details of the program aren't finalized yet and aren't in place, but this minister has, a number of times, made some commitments around the targets for the uptake in a program, even though it doesn't exist yet. So, I will ask again for him to sort of explain that a little bit more.

What is the target uptake for the program on the residential side? What does the minister anticipate that the government will need in terms of resources to meet that demand or that target, and when I say "target" — we have talked about energy-efficiency targets. What I am talking about is the number of applications per year. How many Yukoners are going to be able to take this program and reach a successful application? What is their goal here? We have heard a number of times the minister referencing the amount of greenhouse gases that he anticipates this program will reduce. How is that being determined? What is the level of uptake that the minister anticipates?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I want to be clear. Language matters, and I heard the member opposite say that I haven't provided any information this afternoon. I don't think that is quite accurate. While I am trying not to get into the weeds too much about the specific program details, I have provided quite a bit of information this afternoon to the member opposite about the better building program and the goal. The goal is to cut our greenhouse gas emissions, targeting about 121 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions that are currently captured by the home heating and commercial heating industry.

We have stated as well that the Association of Yukon Communities is in support of the program. I said that in my

opening remarks. Where we were having issues was how they get compensated for administering the program on behalf of the Yukon government over the course of 15 years. That was their main concern. We have struck an agreement on that front. Through our participation in this leadership committee, we have come to an agreement.

The recommendation was made and forwarded to the AYC. The AYC passed a resolution to endorse our approach — the recommendations. I said that I would check with the Association of Yukon Communities, and if there are no hurdles or problems, I will certainly table the information that the member opposite has asked for. I have said I would do that. I have talked about the aspirational goal of the program, which is to save 20 percent. The goal is to try to strike a 20-percent reduction in heating costs and greenhouse gas emissions after an assessment is done by the assessors within government, who will then work with the homeowner to determine the best way to approach these energy retrofits and make that investment in their homes.

What are they comfortable with? What level of loan are they willing to take on, with the goal of getting it toward 20 percent, which is the aspirational goal? Why 20 percent? Because that is really the sweet spot in terms of managing reduction in your costs of running your home and actually reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

If they are going to do more — 30 percent — great. If we are not seeing any that are hitting 20 percent after the assessments are done — if the majority are sitting at 17 percent — then we will have to look at the program and fix or alter it. That has been my MO for years. I know the member opposite has seen it with many programs. Get the program active, working; let's do it, assess it, and retool it as necessary to make sure that it works for Yukoners, that it works for municipalities and the Association of Yukon Communities, and make sure that it works well for the Government of Yukon as well. That's the approach.

The sweet spot is 20 percent, and that is the goal that this program itself — one of many available to Yukoners — and one of some that are available to Yukoners is there. I will say that the program target has been clear from the very beginning. We are looking to get up to 1,000 residential and commercial buildings assessed and improved by 2030. That's the deadline for this. We are looking at trying to get 1,000 of these projects out the door, and the retrofits going — 1,000 retrofits by 2030.

We are not going to get — certainly not this year — I don't even know if we will be able to make the target this year, because, as I said, last year we were hoping to get the legislation through and build a project, and maybe we can't hit this building season.

At this stage, it's unlikely that we're going to hit the 2022 building season, or maybe in the late building season into the fall, hopefully we can get some out the door. But then, starting next year, we'll get going and a more robust assessment and loan program will hit Yukoners, provided that municipalities come on board. Again, it's up to the municipalities to opt in. Until they do, we're looking at rural Yukon.

So, I can't really say how many per year. I know the aspirational goal is to get 1,000 of these loans out by 2030. I know that there is a lot of interest in the program. We'll see what happens later this year — if this legislation passes in the community — and then, going forward in other years, how many of these loans will get out the door.

But the goal is to get 1,000. So, if you are looking at 2023, seven years, 1,000 — the math is somewhere around 150, I would bet. But that's the goal and it depends on the capacity within YG, the interest within the community itself, and the municipalities coming on board. So, there are a lot of variables — whether or not there is some other global catastrophe that intervenes that we can't seem to get enough of these days.

I'll leave it there.

**Mr. Dixon:** Can the minister tell us what the department is using as an estimated value for each application? They must have done some sort of study to understand the fiscal picture. So, I would like to know what they are estimating each application will be on average for this program.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** So, the estimates came out of *Our Clean Future*. We used an energy modelling company to take the average cost of the average home, and the renovations that you typically might get to, to get the best reduction in your greenhouse gas emissions. I am sure you can understand that it gets fairly technical fairly quickly, but what they have assessed is that the average home retrofit that we are looking at is about \$50,000. That is the average, so that is the number we use. That is what they used to do the modelling — up to \$50,000. That is what the energy modelling company came up with, and that is what we have used. Of course, commercial properties are a little bit more expensive that way, so we upped it to \$100,000 for commercial properties. That was based on estimates done by an energy modelling company that was looking at *Our Clean Future* and has looked at the Energy Solutions Centre — the type of retrofits that they have been doing in the past — and that is the information that we have used to come up with the numbers in the program.

**Mr. Dixon:** The minister said that the target by 2023 is 1,000 residences and commercial buildings. So, if the average is \$50,000, then we would anticipate the uptake to be around 100 to 125 per year, depending on whether or not this year is successful or not, so we would need to see a budget of about \$5 million to \$6 million annually. Is the minister aware of any money in the budget currently to accommodate this program in this budget year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** For this year, with some optimism that we will be able to get the deals with municipalities in place — or with a municipality or some municipalities — and that we can begin designing the program and moving it forward, we actually have \$785,000 in the budget this year for the program. That is the initial offering, given that it is a lighter, shorter year. Next year, we will ramp it up, of course, and see what the intake is and then work from there.

We didn't expect to be hitting 150 applications right off the hop. This is going to require the assessments as well, which can be time-intensive. We are going to work to get this program off the ground this year — that is the goal — with a modest

\$785,000. Then, in future years, we will increase the number of loans that we get out the door. That is the approach we are going to take. It's going to be gradual and then will improve and increase over the coming years.

Seeing the time, Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

**Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger):** It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

#### Chair's report

**Ms. Tredger:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 14, entitled *Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, 2017 (2022)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 12, entitled *Income Tax Amendments Act, (2022)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 205, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Finally, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 3, entitled *Act to Amend the Assessment and Taxation Act and the Municipal Act (2021)*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

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