



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 8

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35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Tuesday, May 25, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

**SPECIAL SITTING**

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2021 Special 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

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Government House Leader Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	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
Hon. Ranj Pillai	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
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	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**  
**Tuesday, May 25, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**Withdrawal of motions**

**Speaker:** The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 51, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, was not placed on the Notice Paper as it was out of order.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Introduction of visitors.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members of the Assembly to help me welcome a number of individuals who are here today to celebrate National Tourism Week — industry leaders. I would like to introduce: Mr. Neil Hartling, the chair of TIAY, the Tourism Industry Association; Sandy Legge, the general manager of the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon; Kalin Pallett, president of the board of directors of the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon; Denny Kobayashi, the chair of the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board; as well as Alida Munro, the managing director of the Yukon Convention Bureau.

As well, there are members from the Department of Tourism and Culture. I would like to welcome Jonathan Parker, as well as Sarah Marsh and Deb Greenlaw.

I also want to take a moment because one of the first opportunities that I had was to attend a roast to the other individual who is here. The rest of us didn't have that opportunity, but I think it is really important today. Pierre Germain is here with us. I do not know if we will get another chance to recognize him in the Assembly. He has spent his professional life, in the private sector and within the department, dedicated to tourism in the Yukon. I think a big hand for everybody, but an awful big hand for Mr. Germain who is with us here today as well.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in welcoming two individuals to the Chamber. Saba Javed first came to us as a summer student a number of years ago and never had the opportunity to be here to be introduced. It is a pleasure to say that she is now a staff member — from STEP student to staff. Today for the very first time from our office is Matthias Hoenisch. He has come to us straight from McGill University where he is taking political science and international development. It is a pleasure, Matthias, to have you here for the summer. You have great

shoes to fill with Saba sitting right there next to you. Thank you for joining us.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any tributes?

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of National Tourism Week**

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to National Tourism Week.

Tourism Week recognizes the impact that Canada's tourism industry has on every community from coast to coast to coast. After the events of the past year, the 2021 National Tourism Week specifically recognizes the resilience of a sector immobilized by the restrictions enacted to keep us all safe.

Rather than looking at tourism as an industry, I would like to reflect on tourism as a large team of dedicated, caring Yukoners who make our territory a better place, for tourism truly is an enterprise of people and their pride in the sites, experiences, heritage, and events that make our community unique. To call Yukon home is a truly exceptional privilege, and for our friends and neighbours in the tourism industry, this feeling has become their calling. Their pride and skill are part of what makes Yukon a larger-than-life destination. During this 2021 National Tourism Week, I look forward with optimism and a strong sense of renewal.

With our vaccination rates leading the nation and our safety guidelines proven and well established, I invite Yukoners and fully vaccinated visitors to celebrate these first steps toward a restart of our dynamic tourism sector by showing support for the local businesses and communities that make our territory a world-class destination. Whether it's that river trip that you've been dreaming of or those local attractions just down the road, we can get out there and we can do it safely.

Yukoners deserve the credit of our inevitable epidemiological position, but the diligence and composure shown by Yukon's tourism organizations and operators have certainly helped deliver us to this pivotal moment. The leadership that we have seen from Yukon's tourism sector has been incredible. The ingenuity and enthusiasm are as much a part of what draws visitors as our incredible wilderness, vibrant culture, and captivating heritage.

From the outset, our tourism operators understood that maintaining a healthy tourism sector must not come at the cost of the health and safety of Yukoners. Rather than staying on the sidelines, they became a community of partners contributing their creativity and enthusiasm to the development and adoption of industry-wide health and safety protocols to ensure residents and travellers have confidence that the necessary precautions are being taken. They are active partners in researching overall resident and community sentiment toward tourism to inform our path to recovery.

As we navigate what we hope are the final throes of this pandemic, celebrating the value of Yukon's tourism industry is more important than ever. This National Tourism Week and all summer long, let's celebrate the people, experiences, and

events that make our corner of the world such an incredible place.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Tourism Week, May 23 to 30. There are a lot of stats to recite about our tourism downturn as we pass through this second year of Tourism Week during a pandemic.

We constantly hear: “Shop and visit local.” Last week, I gave a tribute to museums and encouraged folks to visit attractions in their own backyard.

We are so blessed in Yukon as we are road-linked, other than the Village of Old Crow, so I am going to take you on a road trip. The Alaska Highway travels from Dawson Creek, BC through to Fairbanks, Alaska and all the points along the way. They share in a history related to the building of the highway and the stories that have been created since it opened in 1942. As one travels north, the scenery is outstanding — lakes, rivers, mountains, hills, and forests. Wildlife is never guaranteed, but any animal or bird, large or small, is cause to slow down and stop for photos.

Through the capital, Whitehorse, still on the Alaska Highway to the Kluane region — Haines Junction, Destruction Bay, Burwash, and Beaver Creek — words will never describe it adequately. One must go and see the outstanding landscape, colours, and the terrain.

Another option — the Campbell Highway loops through Watson Lake, through Ross River and Faro and links to the Klondike Highway at Carmacks. It is remote, and when you are just feeling like you are the only one on Earth, you meet a vehicle. Each little leg, a spot to stop — you’ll find that you do just that.

A day trip — do the loop from Whitehorse to Carcross and Tagish — well worth the drive, especially those in the populated Whitehorse area who don’t usually camp or are looking for something different. The north Klondike Highway has its own magic, as it touches the Yukon River several times at Carmacks and then again at Minto — on to Pelly Crossing, Stewart Crossing, and crosses both of those rivers of Pelly and Stewart. At the Stewart junction, you turn right and it takes you to the silver mining region, to Mayo, the old-time mine site of Elsa, and then Keno City.

A turn to the left and on to Dawson City — the town that has captured the hearts and thoughts of many, due to the history of the Klondike stampede — so many wonderful businesses and eateries, as well as Gertie’s, to keep one busy. A day trip to the Tombstones on the Dempster is possible and, again, breathtaking.

As a Yukoner, I marvel at my part of Canada. Having travelled extensively through Canada as vice-chair of Aboriginal Tourism Canada and as a board member of the Canadian Tourism Commission, I know that we are special. Canada is so large and sparsely populated that most people who live along the border with the United States don’t realize the magnitude of our land and the amazing people who live here.

My senses come alive in Yukon: the deep magenta colour of our fireweed as it renews the hills and valleys after a forest fire; the sound of the cranes in the fall as they fly overhead, heading south; the smell of a campfire with perked coffee wafting in the air; the taste of freshly caught salmon with local greens; and the touch of the nip of frost as the cold bites your nose — it’s magic.

Tourism Canada is asking people to take a pledge this week, stating, “I pledge to travel in Canada.” So, Yukoners, do your part. Travel in Canada, or travel in Yukon, at least. Wave at everyone you see, and bon voyage.

**Ms. Blake:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to pay tribute to National Tourism Week. Tourism Week is a seven-day event celebrated across Canada to recognize the impact that the tourism sector has on every community across the country. We know that this pandemic has taken a real toll on Yukon businesses that rely on visitors to the Yukon. The Tourism Industry Association of Yukon has made great efforts to be the voice of Yukon tourism businesses, large and small. They are strong advocates who work to promote the Yukon as a place to explore, not just for visitors but for all Yukoners.

National Tourism Week encourages us to support local tourism businesses through eating at a local restaurant, booking an adventure at a local resort, visiting local museums or culture centres, visiting a territorial park, or even renting a canoe or kayak for a river adventure. All of these are ways to actively support our tourism industry in the Yukon.

It is great that we can still explore our Yukon while safely keeping within the chief medical officer of health’s recommendations to keep our communities safe. As we see tourists return to Yukon, it is important that we continue to welcome them and be respectful. They ventured far distances to see this great territory that we call home.

We would also like to recognize Gurdeep Pandher, who is an ambassador of joy, hope, and positivity in sharing Bhangra dance with us and others around the world. Gurdeep has received recognition across Canada for the joy he brings on social media and encourages Yukoners to get out and experience the Yukon.

We encourage all Yukoners to explore our great territory and support our local tourism businesses.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of National Public Service Week**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** On behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, I’m honoured to rise to pay tribute to all of the hard-working people of the public service. National Public Service Week takes place in June, and we have celebrated it here in the Yukon for many, many years. It is a week where we go above and beyond to say thank you to all public service employees, including employees from the Government of Yukon.

It also offers us a chance to reflect on the contributions and impacts of the public service, both big and small. Behind every program and service that the Yukon government delivers, there are many tireless and passionate individuals working to make

them happen. Over a year ago, as we were navigating the first phase of the pandemic, I was working late here in the Legislature. When I went to leave, I got into a great conversation with Ms. Cristy Apostol, one of the people working to keep this building clean and safe for the public. I thanked her for the work that she was doing for all of us.

Whether you are enjoying a campfire in one of our beautiful campgrounds this summer, doing a scenic drive on the highway to a Yukon community, stopping in your local, amazing library, or receiving a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at one of our clinics, it's all a direct result of many public servants. Some of these public servants may be our family members; they certainly are our friends and our neighbours.

This year, in particular, I'm extremely proud and humbled to be part of the public service after what has been a very challenging year where many have risen to the occasion to help the Yukon weather the storm of the pandemic. There have been long days and sleepless nights for many public servants because of the concern for the health and safety of the public that we all serve. Public servants have been working on the front lines and behind the scenes with a genuine level of care and attention to respond to this crisis and deliver government services and programs to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this House, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every public service employee for the work that they do and the ways in which they make a positive impact on the lives of Yukoners.

*Applause*

**Mr. Dixon:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to all public service employees ahead of National Public Service Week, which takes place this year between June 13 and 19.

We understand and respect the indispensable role that public servants play in designing and delivering services to Canadians and Yukoners. My colleagues and I certainly recognize the importance of fostering an overall climate of collaboration and respect and respecting the independence and neutrality of the public service.

The invaluable advice and expertise of public servants are essential to the successful delivery of territorial and federal commitments. Many public service employees have been tasked with serving Canadians through different and innovative ways throughout the pandemic. Across all jurisdictions, branches of the public service have moved to online service delivery and often do so when balancing home, schooling, quarantine measures, and additional workload. This is not unlike millions of other Canadians who have been forced into new ways of doing their jobs.

We do recognize that many public service employees have the additional task of administering a wide range of pandemic-related services and benefits as well. They were tasked with developing and delivering these services and benefits in somewhat short order to assist people across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions.

So, we would like to thank those who work to provide expert advice and exceptional service delivery to our

governments today and would like to recognize those who have served careers with the public service and who have since retired. We appreciate your dedication, experience, and expertise.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to recognize the important work done by those individuals who work within the public service, ahead of National Public Service Week.

Every day, public servants make a difference in the lives of Canadians and Yukoners. These folks have chosen to work in fields that affect our lives first-hand, and the work that they do is important for many, many reasons.

Thank you to all of you who have chosen to commit yourselves to the service of others through the public service. We thank you for your ongoing desire to make the lives of those around you better, and that commitment to supporting others is worth honouring today.

*Applause*

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

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Cathers:** I have written questions for the Minister of Justice regarding legal costs and litigation directed at the government.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 300: Act to Amend the Civil Emergency Measures Act — Introduction and First Reading**

**Mr. Cathers:** I move that a bill entitled *Act to Amend the Civil Emergency Measures Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge that a bill entitled *Act to Amend the Civil Emergency Measures Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for the introduction and first reading of Bill No. 300 agreed to*

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Mr. Dixon:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:  
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the chief medical officer of health to develop a clear path forward for safe reopening that includes timelines and benchmarks to ensure that decisions are open and transparent.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that spending millions of dollars on fencing agriculture land is not the right solution to prevent ongoing damage to farmland, which has been caused by introduced elk.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to revise the elk management plan to provide hunting opportunities and improved protection of farmland, including designating all of the Takhini River valley as an elk-exclusion zone.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Liberal government to repeal the changes to agricultural development and subdivision rules that it autocratically imposed on April 1, 2021, without any public consultation.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to adhere to the 1998 *National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*, to which Yukon is a signatory, and introduce complementary legislation to provide for effective protection of species at risk in the Yukon.

**Speaker:** Are there any statements by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### State of emergency in Yukon

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Since the COVID-19 pandemic began last year, our government has focused on keeping Yukoners safe. On March 27, 2020, a state of emergency was declared under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* in response to the pandemic. Since then, a state of emergency has been extended four times to ensure the continuity of the tools, flexibility, and capacity needed to keep Yukoners safe. The latest extension took place on March 3, 2021, and is slated to expire at the end of the day on May 31, 2021.

When the state of emergency ends, the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and ministerial orders enabling pandemic response management under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* will expire. In some cases, this may result in consequences that will have a negative effect on Yukoners during the pandemic period. The state of emergency will soon be extended for a fifth time. The extension may be in place for up to 90 days.

Of course, the state of emergency can be cancelled at any time, or it may, if it continues to be necessary, be extended. As we have recently demonstrated when we removed the requirement to self-isolate for fully vaccinated individuals, our government regularly evaluates the ministerial orders issued under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and repeals any that are no longer necessary to keep Yukoners safe from COVID-19.

By extending the state of emergency for a fifth time, our government remains nimble and able to adapt to potential rapid

changes in the COVID-19 situation, including monitoring the third wave in Canada and reviewing emerging data on variant spread to inform our decisions.

All jurisdictions in Canada have either created legislation to support the response to COVID-19 or extended their states of emergency. With the health and well-being of Yukoners top of mind, the Government of Yukon is working to transition out of the state of emergency in a measured and strategic way that will involve updates to existing non-emergency legislation.

Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, recently said that Yukon is a model that we're all looking toward for success. That is high praise, but we also must take that responsibility seriously. Keeping protections and supports in place to help Yukoners through these challenging times remains critical to our ongoing management of this pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the members opposite have expressed an interest in discussing the state of emergency here in the Legislature, and I'm sure that Yukoners are keen to hear whether the Official Opposition will be supporting this extension.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thanks for the opportunity to speak to this. During the last election, the Yukon Party was the only party that committed to providing Yukoners with a clear path forward toward a safe reopening that included benchmarks and timelines. We promised this because we heard loud and clear from Yukoners who were frustrated by the poor communication and lack of decisiveness from this Liberal government. We heard from thousands of Yukoners about how this uncertainty was making life more difficult and harming the private sector. We heard from thousands of Yukoners that all they really wanted was clarity. They wanted to know why decisions were being made and how decisions were being made. Unfortunately, the Liberals were, and continue to be, unable to provide this information.

Take, for example, the return to full-time, in-person classes at Whitehorse high schools. Seven days before the Liberals called an unnecessary snap election, they issued a statement saying that schools would not be able to return to in-person classes until children were vaccinated. A couple of days later, right before they called the snap election, they changed that guidance and said that they could return, and they were unable to explain what had changed in just a few days.

For many Yukoners, it was clear that the only thing that had changed was that the Liberals had decided they were going to call a snap election, and they were trying to reduce the political damage of their unpopular decision with respect to schools. Now, with respect to the state of emergency — that is another interesting one — just nine days before they called the unnecessary snap election, the Liberals extended the state of emergency for 90 days. So, we're in a state of emergency, but we'll force the territory into an election that they don't want or need.

This inconsistent and mixed messaging has unfortunately become par for the course for the Liberals, and it was roundly rejected by Yukon voters just a month ago. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals campaigned on a platform based

entirely on the status quo. Their tagline was even “Let’s keep going”. Well, Yukon voters spoke, and they resoundingly rejected the idea of “Let’s keep going”. The Liberals lost a significant number of votes, and the Liberals lost seats. The former Health and Social Services minister even lost her seat — the very minister in charge of the Liberals’ response to the pandemic lost her own seat.

I think it’s important to note that, of all the Canadian elections held during the pandemic, this Yukon Liberal government is the only one that got so clearly rejected by voters. Unlike this Liberal government, every other premier who had an election during the pandemic gained seats and gained votes. This is in large part due to the secrecy and lack of transparency in how the Yukon Liberals have approached this issue.

In fact, it’s notable that the only party that promised a clear plan for reopening resoundingly won the popular vote in the last election. All along, we have said that an extension of the state of emergency should be debated and voted upon in the House. A ministerial statement is not a debate, nor is it a vote. So, as much as the minister believes that he’s being clever and checking off a box with the statement today, it’s merely window dressing.

Further, as the Liberals have not provided us briefings with officials on the state of emergency or with the chief medical officer of health in over six months, we have no information to make an informed opinion on this. So, we challenge the Liberals: If you truly respect democracy, then bring forward a motion for debate this week to publicly share information with Yukoners on the extension of the state of emergency and allow for a vote in the Legislature. Provide us the necessary briefings beforehand, and let’s truly provide debate for democratic oversight.

However, with the Liberals’ record of disrespecting our democratic institutions over the last year, I doubt that they will, but we remain hopeful that we will be allowed briefings, debates, and the ability for a democratic vote in this elected Assembly.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon NDP recognizes the importance of the pandemic response under the *Civil Emergencies Measures Act* and fully expects the state of emergency to be maintained so we can keep measures like self-isolation for unvaccinated folks in place.

We also believe in the importance of clarity and the timely sharing of information. If there should be any lesson learned by any level of government since March 2020, it is the importance of clear and concise communication. People want to know and understand the rules and regulations that affect them, and they want to understand what they need to do to meet those rules. Unfortunately, communication around rules and regulations has not always been clear. A recent example is the May 21 press release that contained next to no information about next steps for restaurants and bars. These businesses were left wondering about what they would be able to do today as restrictions changed, because the same press release does say that, for indoor and outdoor gatherings, funerals, weddings, faith-based

services, gyms, and recreation centres, physical distancing would still be required. But — great news — after looking online all weekend, new guidelines were posted on the yukon.ca website on May 24.

Last year, the road borders were staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Folks travelling through were given a sticker for their vehicles that was easily visible or a pass to let Yukoners know that vehicles and their occupants were allowed safely within our borders. Changes were made in late fall last year and the hours were cut as Yukoners were told that there were fewer crossings as the days grew colder. That has people wondering what happens now as the temperature climbs. The light extends, and more folks are once again on their way to Alaska. When will this information be shared with the Yukon public?

As another example of this lack of clarity, today I was asked by an individual: Why can people participate in both indoor and outdoor sports, but dancing, even with physical distancing, still is not allowed?

With the health and well-being of Yukoners top of mind, what is this government doing to ensure that information that is critical to understanding the rules and regulations of the pandemic response are shared in a more timely and clear manner?

On another note, while we all welcome the loosening of some restrictions facing bars and restaurants, as well as gathering limits, we must also remember that many services that people rely on have also been affected by the pandemic: addiction services, home care, and the shelter are just a few examples. We must ensure that government puts the same effort and consideration into evaluating these restrictions in the light of current science as they do for commercial establishments.

Lastly, I know that managing COVID restrictions requires a tremendous amount of work from our public health team, and I want to salute the hard work that goes into this and to thank all of those who play an important role in keeping us safe.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I am really happy to hear the thoughts of the opposition parties today on the floor of the House regarding CEMA. We need steady leadership to get us on the path to recovery. Our government is providing that leadership and has been for the last year plus.

It started with the cancellation of the Arctic Winter Games — a very, very difficult decision. We are not afraid of taking the difficult decisions to keep Yukoners safe, and we have continued that approach throughout the pandemic for Yukoners. We have put Yukoners — people — first. We have put the health of Yukoners first, and from that has flowed one of the strongest economies in the country — a place where kids are in school, a place where people are playing hockey. That is hard to say in any other jurisdiction in the country, but we can say it here and we can say it with pride because of the sacrifices, the diligence, and the kindness that Yukoners have shown throughout this pandemic. They got behind our government when we made those tough decisions, and they followed us along. They have to be commended for the sacrifices and the measures that they have taken.

We have seen other jurisdictions where this hasn't happened. The Leader of the Official Opposition and I are going to have to disagree a little bit again today — agree to disagree. The approaches that they are outlining have been followed in other conservative jurisdictions, and those results have not been particularly good, Mr. Speaker. They stand in sharp contrast to what Yukoners have accomplished, which are being acknowledged across Canada and beyond. We have kept our eyes firmly on the science and have tried to avoid the trappings of emotion. We have put people first; we have put health first. The path that we have chosen is measured and incremental, and it has been successful.

The member opposite has no understanding, seemingly — the Leader of the Official Opposition — about the amount of work that this has taken. It has been a titanic effort on behalf of every single department within this government — the same civil servants whom the member opposite was praising not more than five minutes ago. That effort is what is coming under criticism today. The fact is that the member opposite suggests that no work or no planning has happened, but what we have accomplished so far hasn't happened by accident, Mr. Speaker. It has happened through hard work and planning, and that is what has kept Yukon and Yukoners safe. From enforcement to education to health matters to vaccination efforts, which are leading — if not all of Canada, all of the continent, perhaps many places in the world. The member opposite does not acknowledge any of that work. He doesn't want to acknowledge those tremendous successes.

When you do it well and you do it right, it looks easy, Mr. Speaker. That is the trick — making it look easy. It hasn't been easy. It has taken immense planning, immense execution, a lot of honing — late nights, weekends, as my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, mentioned earlier today — a tremendous effort.

And you know what? We can hold our heads high because of what we have accomplished here, which is being praised nationally and frankly around the world — elsewhere — because we have done it right. We have done it consciously, we've done it measuredly, and we have all of the results to show how successful it has been.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Tourism development strategy

**Mr. Dixon:** The Speech from the Throne announced the creation of what the government is calling the “Great Yukon Summer” campaign. According to the government, it will help Yukon businesses build marketing campaigns to maximize tourism this summer. The May long weekend is the unofficial start of summer. It has come and gone, and the Liberals have still released no details on its plan. Once again, we see the Liberals waiting, not just until the last minute to announce a plan, but the last minute has come and gone. We are now in summer and we still have no details on the flagship tourism support program.

Can the minister tell us why this program is so delayed?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The Great Yukon Summer is really focused on encouraging and inspiring Yukoners to travel in Yukon — to revisit and discover for the first time the endless world-class cultural and outdoor experiences that our territory has to offer.

In quick response to this, we came back into the Assembly about three weeks ago. The folks who were here today and came to visit us have worked tirelessly. There is going to be a lot of information this week that we will be providing to folks. We've met with industry individuals already. We've been speaking to the marketing firms. The team has done a fantastic job of looking at all elements of this. I think that it's going to be something that's going to be a premier program for all jurisdictions in the country.

I just want to thank the folks at Tourism and Culture for all the work and some of the assistance from Economic Development. We're really excited about what's going to be rolling out this week and the hard work — and really for turning it around in such a short period of time. I don't believe that it's delayed at all. When you are looking at 21 days to build a program that's probably going to be leading for domestic spending, I think that's good timing and really hard work.

**Mr. Dixon:** Well, summer has already started over the weekend, and even as recently as this morning, we've heard directly from several major tourism operators who have received zero details on this program so far.

Hotels are getting calls from Yukoners asking to make bookings using this program, and unfortunately, the hotels are forced to say that they have no details and no information on what the customer is talking about.

As a result of the lack of information-sharing from the Liberals, customers are taking out their frustrations on the people whom this program is actually meant to help.

If the Liberals don't get their act together, Mr. Speaker, they could quickly turn this campaign from the great Yukon summer into the great Yukon bummer, so when will Yukoners actually get to access this program?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** It will be so important for Yukoners to step up and support our local tourism operators, many who were represented here today. When you take a look at the overall economy, we have had a really strong economy over the last year — when you focus on construction, when you focus on the mining sector, and when you focus on the knowledge-based economy sector. So, again, I ask all Yukoners — and I hope that all members of the Assembly will take an opportunity to make sure that we spend, our neighbours spend, our friends spend here — anyone who is in a position and can afford to do that — because the folks who have been in the most difficult situation are our tourism operators.

I would offer to the Leader of the Official Opposition: Please, when we complete here today, let me know who those folks are. I'll reach out to those operators. That's news to me; I have not heard information such as this. I would be happy to follow up with the exact company, speak with them, and then help them out with any of those clients.

We're excited about what's going to happen this week. I don't want to get ahead of some of our internal decisions that



have to be made, but we are very excited to see some of the things that are going to be rolling out this week.

**Mr. Dixon:** The operators whom I'm talking about are just looking for details from this government. So, if the government is willing to provide the details, then great — I would love to hear them. Next time the minister is on his feet, he can provide that information directly to those operators via this Legislature.

I know that Yukoners, in general, agree with the minister. They want to support local businesses, and they want to access this program, but they can't. It has been announced by the government, but it hasn't been implemented yet and there are no details at all.

One of the complaints that industry had about the domestic tourism marketing campaign last year was that it was slow to get started. These types of marketing campaigns take time to develop, implement, and they need time to have the desired effect on their target audiences. Summer is now well underway, and Yukoners haven't seen any formal advertising on this new program yet.

So, can the minister tell us when this program will be up and running, and when will they start advertising it?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** It's key to understand that, first of all, when you look at our budget for this year, it does set a clear path to recovery, not just for our local tourism market but as we go through what we're going to see for the rest of the year. I think it's important to know that there's a sustainable long-term approach to it.

Quite simply, there are a number of elements to this program — the incentive for travel domestically — the support on the marketing side. But also, it is very important to understand that, over the last number of weeks, we also have to make sure that our communities are comfortable with this travel happening, which is one of the other elements of this. So, whether you are doing resource development in those communities or tourism, it is important to make sure that there is a comfort level. That is part of the work.

The other part of the work is — when you take a look at the incentive, of course, you want to make sure that, when you cost it out and when you look at the methodology and you disseminate what you believe the impact is, you have the proper numbers together, and that work has also been done — whether it has been on the marketing side, whether it has been on the event piece, or whether it has been on the work looking at the incentives.

I think that they have done absolutely great work. I think that the department should be extremely proud of itself. I think that Yukoners are going to be very excited. I appreciate the fact that we get to talk about this today, because I think that there is going to be some great news and Yukoners should listen this week.

#### **Question re: Mineral development strategy**

**Ms. McLeod:** The mineral development strategy proposes the creation of an industrial water tax on the mining industry. Is the Liberal government planning on bringing in an industrial water tax?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Yukon mineral development strategy presents an important conversation, and mineral development and management in the territory affects all Yukoners. We will continue to follow and respect the process in place as we work toward successor legislation. We will not predetermine the outcomes of that process. I stood on my feet last week and I said, "Hey, we got the mineral development strategy." It came out last month — I think in the middle of April — and we are looking forward. I have started conversations with industry. I have started conversations with governments about it, and we will work toward how that strategy will evolve into successor legislation. We are really happy with the breadth of the work that is there. I am not going to stand here today and talk about specific elements within the strategy. What I will say is that it is a great starting place to move us forward — and making sure that mining will be sustainable here in the territory for decades to come.

**Ms. McLeod:** The mineral development strategy proposes the implementation of online map staking for claims. Is the Liberal government planning to bring in map staking?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am just trying to answer this question broadly to say that we have a process. That process is to take the mineral development strategy as it is proposed and now work with industry, the public, and governments and work through toward successor legislation, and that is terrific.

I have just said that I would not answer on specific pieces, but I will say that this past Friday, when I was in Dawson for the Klondike Placer Miners' Association meetings — great conversations that we had with them. I also stopped in at the mining recorder's office and talked to them about their realities, and we discussed the whole issue about how claims are mapped. We got into a conversation. That is what is going to happen, Mr. Speaker. It is a conversation with Yukoners, with industry, and with governments about the mineral development strategy and the great starting suggestions that they have proposed to help us get to successor legislation and a sustainable mining future here in the territory — one that respects environmental values, social responsibility, government-to-government relationships, and how we can have mining here in a modern way that is going to be able to have certainty and sustainability for the long term.

**Ms. McLeod:** The mineral development strategy proposes the creation of a payroll tax for workers from out of the territory who work at Yukon mines. The NDP also promised this during the election as a way to pay for their massive amount of platform commitments. As part of the Liberal-NDP coalition agreement, the Liberals have agreed to bring in many of these massive platform commitments. So, are the Liberals also planning on bringing in a payroll tax, or will they resist this call from their NDP coalition partners?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I am really happy to get to my feet to talk about our commitments. We are committed to responsible development and management of Yukon's mineral resources in a way that protects the environment, respects the rights and traditions of Yukon First Nations, and benefits all Yukoners.

Mining and mineral exploration remain of central importance to the Yukon's economy and have contributed significantly to the territory's economic performance throughout the pandemic. We are committed to working with our partners to develop successor legislation. That includes the industry, governments, and the public. We believe that this legislation is centrally important to the whole of the territory. We see this as a really important path. I am really happy with the work of the mineral development strategy. I would like to thank them for their work. I think that there is a lot to go through there, and I am looking forward to talking with Yukoners about it.

**Question re: Elk-agriculture conflict**

**Ms. White:** A few weeks ago, we met with the agriculture association, where they shared major concerns from their members about elk damage. Many of these farmers live in exclusion zones, such as the Takhini valley, where elk are protected from being hunted or deterred. Each year, crops continue to be damaged by the elk, and the farmers continue to lose products and income.

When a farmer facing elk damage asks for support, they get a small subsidy to install expensive game fencing on their property. This subsidy doesn't even begin to cover the installation, let alone the ongoing expenses and the time it takes to maintain the fencing.

What else is this government doing right now to help Yukon farmers with protecting their crops from further elk damage?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you to the Third Party for the question. The different values of elk and agriculture in the Takhini valley are challenging to reconcile. For many Yukoners, including hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts, it is important to have a sustainable elk population. For many farmers, there's a need for population management and property protection.

The elk agriculture working group met with farmers in 2019 and 2020 to discuss concerns. As a result of these discussions, we have moved forward with a multi-pronged approach to maintain but more closely manage elk in the Yukon. This includes reducing the population in the Takhini valley by up to 40 percent over two years and providing financial support to farmers to build elk barrier fences in the eastern buffer zone.

We continue to work with affected land owners, farmers, interest groups, and Yukon First Nations to address elk-agriculture conflicts.

**Ms. White:** I'm sure that brings lots of confidence to the Takhini valley farmers.

In the Liberal Party platform from this past election, this government committed to — and I quote: "Support the increased production of high quality, local ingredients."

When we talk about food security, we need to think about how our farmers are able to meet the growing demand for local food. Elk cause intense damage, and farmers have to deal with loss of product and income as a result. This is especially the case for farmers living in exclusion zones like the Takhini

valley. The solution currently suggested by government is costly and ultimately ineffective. Many farmers are deterred from even getting an estimate on game fencing because of how expensive it is.

What is this government doing to follow through on its commitments to food security while protecting agriculture in the Yukon from further elk damage?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just a few points that I want to raise — first of all, that two-year plan that the Minister of Environment just referenced has had some success. The first briefing that I got on this subject said that there had been — I think there were 43 elk harvested as of April 30, 2021. Given that the population is a couple hundred or so — I know that the number is never exact, but that indicates that the harvest is starting to work and that we're on track to try to reach the target of 40-percent reduction. So, that's a good piece.

I know that the department is working with different fencing options. I think that they're working with the Department of Environment on another option around an electrical type of fence. We will work on other options and we will continue to work with the farmers in the area.

This was a solution that was arrived at by talking to the people in the community, by talking to those farmers about what might work as a good solution. It's a two-year plan. It's partway through. I'm sure that we will adjust as we go and continue to monitor, and we will work together with farmers to try to come up with a good solution for elk and how it's affecting agriculture. Overall, what we can say is that agriculture is increasing here in territory, and I look forward to talking more about the importance of agriculture in the Yukon.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, this is such a large concern to farmers that leaders of the three political parties have been invited for a farm tour to see that elk damage this coming Friday.

When a farmer finds elk damage, they have to rely on conflict hunters to deter the elk. A farmer has to call the department, which notifies a conflict hunter to arrive in the area. It can sometimes take several days for a hunter to show up, and by then, the elk are long gone. The Takhini valley farmers have been burdened with the cost of installing and maintaining expensive game fencing, which also increases their capital gains tax. It is clear that conflict hunting in its current form does not work, and fencing is an expensive band-aid solution to the growing elk herd.

Will the minister commit to reviewing the exclusion zone in the Takhini valley?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes; we will always work to review this. This was a two-year plan, and the whole point was to see how it worked and to review it. I am happy to work with the Minister of Environment. I'm happy to work with farmers in the area to talk about whether it is a strong solution or how it can be improved. One of the things I will say is that — and when I stand later today, hopefully, to speak about the budget, I will take that opportunity to talk about dollars that we've put forward under the Agriculture branch to go toward fencing so that we can

subsidize the cost to those farmers, noting that this is a cost for them. I'm happy to talk about that.

What I will say is that yes, when someone is called, it takes some time to get out there, but what I understand is that they are actually working very hard to support farmers in the area and to respond as quickly as possible.

As we acknowledged the public service earlier today, I would like to say thanks to the branch, because I think they have been doing a really good job to try to address this problem overall.

#### **Question re: Mineral development strategy**

**Mr. Kent:** Last week, we asked the new Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about successor resource legislation and free-entry staking. When responding to both topics, the minister referenced how he would work with them through the mineral development strategy. This, and his answers earlier today, leads us to believe that the Liberal government will be endorsing, adopting, and implementing the MDS.

Can the minister confirm for us that this is the case? If so, when will it be announced publicly?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** If I've given the impression that we're adopting the whole of the mineral development strategy, then I have not done my job here. What I have said is that we'll work from that as a starting point.

I have really appreciated the work that went into the mineral development strategy. I've gone through it a couple of times now, but what I'm looking forward to is talking with industry, with governments, and with Yukoners about how we take that strategy and move toward successor legislation. I'm not suggesting that it be adopted as a whole, in any way. I think that there are a lot of conversations coming up. What I'm excited about is that we're moving toward successor legislation, and I appreciate the mineral development strategy as a starting point.

**Mr. Kent:** So, when it comes to rewrites of the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*, the mineral development strategy states — and I quote: “Drafting and bringing into force the new mineral resource legislation and regulations within the next four years (by the end of 2025). Achieving such an aggressive timeline will require all involved to declare the work a priority and to dedicate the necessary resources.” Yet the NDP-Liberal coalition agreement commits them to tabling updated pieces of this legislation in the fall of 2022.

If the MDS believes that four years is an aggressive timeline for this work to be completed, how do the Liberals plan on having it done in just 16 months?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, when I sat down with the Chamber of Mines, this was one of our first conversations. What I talked to them about was working earnestly, because it is so important — successor legislation. I hope I've made that point abundantly clear here — that we support sustainable mining in the territory. The only way to have sustainable mining is if we move to successor legislation where we respect

environmental rights, where we respect social values, and where we respect government and planning processes.

One of the things that I can say is that the department has been working on the development of the *Lands Act* as part of the successor resource legislation. That work is underway.

So, that is one of the ways where we will be able to move a little sooner, and I respect that there is lots of work in front of us. I appreciate the member opposite talking about the importance of it. I echo his remarks. It is incredibly important — successor legislation.

**Mr. Kent:** I am not sure if the minister heard the question, but I am curious how he believes that they are going to be able to get that successor resource legislation — the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* — done and tabled in 16 months.

However, the mineral development strategy also references the collaborative framework to improve the environmental assessment system that the Premier announced in 2017 but was unable to deliver on. A news release with quotes from the Premier, CYFN, and the Chamber of Mines at that time stated — and I quote: “The three parties have also committed to address industry concerns around timelines and re-assessments through a collaborative framework.”

So, can the new minister update us on when the last meeting took place on the collaborative framework and when it is expected to be completed, or have the Liberals abandoned this promise that the Premier made to industry over four years ago?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly disconcerting to hear the narrative from the members opposite. I also heard the chair of the mineral development strategy talk about a four-year time frame to be able to implement all 81 recommendations of the mineral development strategy. I believe that to be very ambitious, but to make it sound like successor legislation is those 81 of those recommendations — that is a big leap.

If the member opposite would take a look, we responded to the mineral development strategy and we had concerns about some of these recommendations. The legal ability to do some of these was one of the concerns as well. But again, to say that a commitment to successor legislation, which the Yukon Party also committed to, means that all 81 of those recommendations would be implemented — are they saying that this is what they interpreted when they went door to door to Yukoners this year and said that they would implement successor legislation — that they would implement all 81? Because they are making it seem like that is what we have to do now because this government committed to successor legislation.

#### **Question re: Mining within municipal boundaries**

**Mr. Kent:** I can see why the Premier is uncomfortable talking about the collaborative framework, because it was a commitment that he made to industry four years ago — a commitment that has gone unfulfilled to this point.

A major issue for the placer mining industry is the issue of mining within municipal boundaries. In the December 16, 2016, CBC web story, the former Minister of Energy, Mines

and Resources said that he would be meeting in early 2017 with First Nations, the Association of Yukon Communities, and other stakeholders to discuss mining within municipal boundaries and develop an action plan.

That was four and a half years ago and we still have seen no action from the Liberals on this issue. Understandably, the mining industry is nervous about what this new minister will mean for the future of their livelihoods.

Can the minister tell us when the Liberals will live up to their promise to develop an action plan for mining within municipal boundaries?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, I attended many of those meetings where we spoke with communities about mineral staking and development policy for planned and zoned communities. We are still working on the options to reduce conflicts related to mineral staking and development in our communities.

We did an initial engagement and provided a report on what we heard to key stakeholders. I know that things were slowed down because of COVID. I have been talking to the department about how that will get back on track. We learned that mining creates challenges in some communities, such as limiting residential development. We also learned that many Yukoners want to resolve these issues and preserve the economic and cultural values of the industry.

We will use the results of this initial engagement to develop a policy, which we will present to the public for review. Any proposed policy will complement other ongoing mineral sector initiatives such as the development of new mining legislation that we have just been speaking about on the floor of the Legislature.

**Mr. Kent:** Just for the minister, this commitment was made four and a half years ago, and the COVID pandemic started a year ago. There were three and a half years prior to the COVID pandemic, so to blame it on COVID is quite something; it is a bit of a stretch at the least.

Yukon's demographics, of course, have evolved over the years, as have Yukoners' land use requirements, which are impacting access to many long-standing mining claims — claims that predate the expansion of municipal boundaries. We have seen an increasing number of cases of municipalities denying development permits to operators. Regardless of whom the Liberals would choose to blame, they committed to fixing this problem back in December 2016, and here we are, four and a half years later, and we have seen no action from the Liberals and no resolution to this problem.

Will the minister agree to sit down with the Association of Yukon Communities and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association to resolve this issue this summer?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, just to make it clear: As I just pointed out, the department, under the leadership of the previous minister, did go and talk about mining in municipalities. I myself attended several of those meetings to listen to those conversations — not how the department was doing those conversations but rather what citizens from around the territory were saying. I listened to that first-hand. That is actual work which has been underway.

I would be very happy to meet with the Association of Yukon Communities and with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. In fact, when I met with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association this past Friday, we talked about the importance of having regular meetings. There were several items on the agenda, including mining in municipalities. I would really enjoy talking with them. Maybe the suggestion is for a joint meeting. I'll look for that opportunity. I'll reach out to the Association of Yukon Communities and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association to see whether a joint meeting would be what they want, but I would be happy to meet with both groups jointly or separately.

**Mr. Kent:** As I mentioned, many of these mineral claims predate the subsequent expansion of municipality boundaries, and therefore, the claim holders' legal rights must be respected and upheld, especially considering the significant financial resources that are often invested in keeping the claims in good standing year after year.

The claim to exclusive mineral rights is of little use without the ability to access those minerals. While we are not in favour of expropriation, we recognize that, in some cases, a claim may ultimately have to be expropriated.

Will the minister commit to this House that the government will provide fair compensation value for holders of claims that have to be expropriated?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that we plan to develop a draft policy informed by community governments, as well as representatives of the mineral industry. This draft would be presented to Yukon First Nations through formal consultation and to all Yukoners through public engagement. Until a policy is established, we continue to suggest that claim holders contact municipal governments if their claims are within a municipality. We continue to work with municipal governments and affected First Nations to review and permit any proposed mining projects within community boundaries.

We've seen some of these same questions when we've had parks created in the past, when we've had land use planning processes, and we've been learning how to navigate all of those over time. I think that those same practices will be held here because it's a similar sort of situation. We want to make sure that those claim holders are treated fairly and we've been developing those processes all along.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### Bill No. 200: *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21* — Third Reading

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 200, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Just a small recap. The *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21* forecasted an increase of \$33.4 million in gross operation and maintenance and capital spending. This is made up of \$24.9 million in O&M and \$8.5 million in capital. This is also offset by an increase of \$28.7 million in O&M recoveries and \$9.6 million in capital recoveries. As well, revenues are forecasted to increase by \$8.5 million due to an increase in own-source tax revenue from continued economic growth. These changes are forecasted to result in a revised deficit of \$7 million, which reflects an improvement in the government's fiscal picture from the first supplementary estimates.

I will now open the floor to comments and critiques from my colleagues.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would note, in speaking to this, that unfortunately, due to the fact that the Liberals, along with their NDP coalition partners, pushed through a motion shortening the length of this Sitting to a third or less of what a normal Spring Sitting is, we simply don't have the time to debate everything that we would like to and have chosen to prioritize debate on the budget, going forward, instead of on the money that has already been spent.

I would note that it's a bit rich for the Liberals to do as they did — to shorten this Sitting and then criticize us for not asking more questions about their past spending when they have deprived us of the time to do so.

I also have to note that, when supplementary estimates for closing off the previous fiscal year were tabled on March 4, just eight days later, the government issued a special warrant with millions of dollars in increased spending — also, including the situation that, in the space of eight days, we learned that the financial situation was worse than the government had claimed just over a week before.

In closing off my remarks on this budget, I would note that we simply do not have the time that we would like, or that we should have, to debate spending, including this budget bill. I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that the Yukon Party, in the last election, committed to increased public debate and democratic oversight, and we won the popular vote on that basis. In contrast, the Premier should be reminded that his government lost the popular vote, lost seats, and barely held on to government.

Mr. Speaker, democracy matters, public spending matters, and democratic oversight of public spending does matter. Unfortunately, in this Sitting, we simply do not have the time that we should have to debate the spending of the Liberal government.

**Ms. White:** In rising today to speak about the third supplementary, I guess there is part of me that is relieved to know that we won't spend a multitude of days with one specific member asking questions about money that has already been

spent, as that has been the previous practice for numerous years. Like many, I appreciate seeing where that money has been spent as it comes to us in a reconciled way. It has been spent, and we look forward to having a conversation about the money that will be spent.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to a vote.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members opposite for their comments. You know, Bill No. 200, second supplementary estimates for 2020-21, for that fiscal year — it is an extremely important piece of spending in that supplementary spending.

While the 2020-21 year was definitely an uncertain year by all accounts, many of the items in the supplementary estimates should not be a surprise to the members. Given the level of uncertainty in the last year, this government anticipated early on that a second supplementary estimate would be required. While this was largely an inevitable activity, the government took every necessary step to ensure that the funding included in the bill was appropriate and that it was effective and efficient and fell within the priorities of the government. Those priorities are to maintain our commitment to fiscal responsibility, to provide Yukoners with the services that they have come to know and that they need and expect. Perhaps the most important was to support those who needed it the most — especially last year with the pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to taking the always important step to make sure that the money was spent wisely, the government was also working very, very closely with federal partners to ensure that Yukon would be able to make strategic use of the federal dollars wherever possible and to find flexibility therein as well.

Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that our world has changed considerably since March 2020 when our main estimates for that year were tabled. At that time, the territory was busily preparing for the arrival of friends, family, and athletes from all around the world to kick off the Arctic Winter Games. While we started the year looking forward to large crowds and huge events and celebrations with our international community, we ended up with Yukoners staying closer to home and limiting social interactions — quite the year.

Just as we had to make adjustments to our social practices, we also had to adjust our budgeting as well. In one short year, our focus shifted from getting events and organizations off the ground to helping these organizations to stay afloat. The support for Yukoners has continued to this day. For more than a year, the government has had daily conversations about how to get the necessary health resources, economic supports, border controls, and other programs in place. This has ensured that Yukoners and Yukon businesses, front-line workers, and health professionals all have the tools and supports that they need for the territory to get us, all together, through these truly challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, compared to many jurisdictions around the country and around the world, the Yukon has fared relatively well in the face of COVID-19. Credit must be given to staff in all departments as they demonstrate this government's ability to adapt and respond to the changing needs of Yukoners — programs like the paid sick-leave rebate. They have supported Yukon businesses, workers, and self-employed people affected by COVID-19 for the whole past year.

Under this program, workers were able to receive up to 10 days' wages without a doctor's note if they were sick, self-isolating, or caring for other household members. As the rest of Canada has wrestled with the challenges around creating this type of program, this rebate was supporting Yukoners from the very beginning of our COVID relief last year. It has allowed citizens to continue to make a living while reducing the concerns around taking the time off from work that they need. It was a game changer, Mr. Speaker. Yukon's sick-leave program has been a model across the country. It has received national attention for how to support workers. I am very proud of that work, and I think that the public servants should be very proud of their work.

The success we have seen in the last year has not been without the tremendous efforts of all of the territory's residents. It has required sacrifices from every single person I know, whether this involves staying apart from friends and family over the Christmas holidays, cancelling winter getaway traditions, or even limiting social gatherings and social circles.

For many, this has meant a loss of hours at work or requirements to self-isolate as needed. This government feels a great deal of empathy for everybody who is affected by COVID-19. Making sure that we all can make it through the pandemic together, as a territory, has been one of our key motivating factors during these times.

While 2020 introduced significant challenges for all Yukoners, we have been very optimistic, and we should be, about what 2021 has to offer.

We have seen how our communities can pull together in a time of crisis, how our neighbours check in on one another, how our front-line workers keep the shelves stocked, and how Yukoners have found new ways to offer services safely and effectively.

We have also seen the success of Yukon's largest vaccination campaign in its history, which gives us hope for a return to normalcy in the months and the years ahead.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I can't talk about this supplementary estimate without also recognizing the great help that we have received along the way. We have received help from our First Nation partners, from our municipality partners, as well as from the private sector. We must acknowledge the cooperation that we have enjoyed with the federal government as well. As a result of this relationship, Yukon will see a significant number of costs recovered for the delivery of its programs and services, and you see that reflected in the *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, Bill No. 200.

**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:** Disagree.

**Mr. Kent:** Disagree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Disagree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Disagree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Disagree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Disagree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Disagree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

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

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 200 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 200 has passed this House.

## Bill No. 2: Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021) — Third Reading

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 2, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McLean.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I move that Bill No. 2, entitled *Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 2, entitled *Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I want to start today by once again thanking our hard-working public servants. In light of our great tribute that we had today, I really want to hold them up and thank them not only for all of their hard work on this small act amendment, but all of the work that has gone into rethinking, revisioning, and reimagining what childcare can look like in the territory. I specifically want to thank our director of Policy and Planning, Michael McBride, and wish him very well in his upcoming retirement and all of his hard work that he has put into the Department of Education over the years. I also want to thank the assistant deputy minister of Policy and Planning for the Department of Education, Kelli Taylor, and, of course, all of the staff who work hard behind the scenes.

I want to start by acknowledging all of the hard-working childcare providers throughout the Yukon and those making

quality early learning and childcare a high priority. An excellent example of this is — I was happy to meet with folks from the Little Blue Daycare over the weekend. They spoke to me with such passion about their desire to expand operations to better meet the current and growing needs of Dawson City. I really am thankful that we have folks like that in the territory who are working hard to reimagine and think about the possibilities and really put their time and effort into the upstream of childcare in our territory. This, again, is one small step, but it's a big one.

As per our recommendation in *Putting People First — the final report of the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services*, we are aligning all of our early learning programs and services under the Department of Education to allow for improved planning and decision-making.

As I have said previously, these amendments will finalize the transfer of responsibility for the *Child Care Act* to the Minister of Education and will allow the minister to designate a director from Education to be responsible for carrying out the responsibilities under the act. These amendments are therefore essential to bring clarity and to allow for the effective delivery of government's early learning and childcare mandate. The transfer of the early learning mandate from Health and Social Services to Education ensures that all decisions relating to early learning are aligned under one department and that children are at the centre of all decisions.

Across Canada, eight jurisdictions have integrated early learning and childcare with Education — that being the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Increasing access to affordable high-quality early learning opportunities will allow families to take advantage of work opportunities, ease the financial burden for Yukon families and other caregivers, and, most importantly, help to give Yukon children the best possible start in their lives.

In addition to aligning the mandate for early learning under one department, as recommended in *Putting People First*, we implemented another recommendation from *Putting People First* on April 1 by introducing affordable early learning and childcare programs.

I want to reiterate that we heard clearly during the engagement for universal childcare that the *Child Care Act* needs to be modernized, and we will do that in collaboration with First Nation governments, stakeholders, and interested Yukoners in a thoughtful way where all views will be considered. This government welcomes the values, views, and opinions of all Yukoners. We will continue to move forward with our strong commitment to seek input from, and foster respectful relationships with, citizens, stakeholders, communities, First Nation governments, municipalities, and other governments. This input and engagement will continue to inform the actions that we take as a government in order to build thriving Yukon communities and help Yukon families lead healthy, happy lives. Again, we want to thank those who worked so diligently on this bill and on the implementation of affordable early learning and childcare programs in Yukon.

I want to thank the members for their support of this bill so far, and I look forward to the passing of it today.

**Mr. Dixon:** Thank you to the minister for her comments here at third reading, as well as the debate that we had earlier in Committee of the Whole. I would like to echo her comments and thank the officials for not only the briefing they provided, but the support that they provided to the minister in Committee debate which facilitated good discussion between members at that time, when we were in Committee.

As I have indicated before, we support the transition of the branch to the Education department from Health and Social Services, which this bill seeks to facilitate and to provide the legislative framework for.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we do remain interested in the ongoing and future comprehensive review of the *Child Care Act*, which is yet to come. I note that the minister did make that clear commitment in Committee of the Whole — that the *Child Care Act* would be reviewed in a more comprehensive way in the future. However, it's worth noting that no one on the other side of the House has yet given us a timeline as to when that *Child Care Act* review will occur.

We await that information and look forward to seeing that comprehensive review being undertaken. As we note, this was a recommendation of the Yukon Child Care Board in several of its annual reports but, most notably, the most recent one, which was tabled in the Legislature last week.

Mr. Speaker, we support this bill and look forward to seeing it come to a vote.

**Ms. White:** Just to echo the comments of my colleagues, the Yukon NDP will be supporting this bill today. We look forward to seeing childcare become a fully accessible and available service to all Yukon families. We know that there have been some barriers in some communities so far. More than that, again, I'll put out the request that, as opposition, we would really appreciate knowing how the program has worked so far and how it will continue to work.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Thank you to the members opposite for your comments and support today for this small and yet very important amendment to the *Child Care Act*. I welcome and embrace the responsibility from Health and Social Services to Education. This is an important step toward modernization of childcare in our Yukon Territory. I take the comments from the members opposite — specifically regarding a full briefing around next steps and how the program has been developed. As we move forward, I will endeavour to work toward that.

On that note, thank you again to the members opposite and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. 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 18 yeas, nil nays.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 2 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 2 has passed this House.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

**Bill No. 201: First Appropriation Act 2021-22 — continued**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

**Department of Energy, Mines and Resources**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am rising to talk about Energy, Mines and Resources. I would just like to begin by welcoming our deputy minister, John Bailey, and our assistant deputy minister from Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications — and no stranger to the Legislature — Ms. Shirley Abercrombie. I am sure that everybody welcomes them here.

I wanted to talk about our budget. The department has prepared a lot of notes for me, and I will try to shorten them up a little bit, just in order to allow for more dialogue with members opposite, but overall, this year's budget is working to set us on a path to recovery and make life more affordable for Yukoners.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources obviously has an important role in that path. The department's job is to regulate the responsible development of our natural resources. It is a diverse department that covers mining, agriculture, land, forestry, and energy sectors — a lot of different groups and different branches.

There is wonderful expertise and professionalism in the department. I would just like to say thank you to the department for the early meetings that I've had with them. I know that they are working to provide benefits to our citizens and to the economic well-being of the territory.

This past year has been one like no other, and many land and resource sectors were significantly affected by the pandemic. At the same time, most resource activity still continued to some degree, meaning that the hard-working staff at Energy, Mines and Resources had to be innovative and adaptable to continue to carry out their duties. There is an incredible range of initiatives, as I've already said, and I'm going to try to provide a summary of the department's budget and then go into some details on many of the programs and their estimates.

Overall, total appropriations are just over \$72.5 million for Energy, Mines and Resources, which represents an increase of \$8.6 million from last year's budget. The increase is primarily a result of increased funding for water treatment and to conduct care and maintenance at Wolverine mine and funding to implement *Our Clean Future*.

Of the \$72.5-million overall budget, the total capital appropriations are estimated at \$1 million, which represents a \$537,000 increase from last year's budget. The increase is primarily due to funding to enable the purchase of new electric vehicle charging stations, which is exciting.

There is an Other category, which has a net of a \$6.8-million increase, and that's associated with new funding for *Our Clean Future* and Wolverine workplans, as I just mentioned. Government transfers are budgeted at \$11.8



million, an increase of \$1.9 million from last year's just under \$10-million budget. The increase in transfers is primarily due to an additional \$1.7 million in *Our Clean Future* funding for residential and commercial energy efficiency rebates.

Under the Sustainable Resources division, we have Agriculture, Land Management, Forest Management, and Land Planning branches. The total operation and maintenance estimate for the division is \$12 million, an increase of \$748,000 from the previous year. This change is partly due to the addition of two full-time equivalents, one term position for the Forest Management branch for *Our Clean Future*, and one for a new meat inspector position in the Agriculture branch.

The total capital budget for Sustainable Resources is \$477,000, which is an increase of \$52,000. This increase in funding is allocated toward development of timber harvest areas in the Yukon.

Under Land Management — this branch makes land available for Yukoners and Yukon development projects. They do this through the development and implementation of appropriate land tenure and management legislation, regulations, and policies.

The staff of the branch also provide land and advisory services to all municipalities, First Nations, and Government of Yukon departments.

I would like to offer my personal thanks to staff who kept the public counter running at the Land Management branch. Despite the pandemic, we had a very busy year in the branch, and I would like to mention a couple of highlights. Last November, the branch conducted the largest land lottery and tender of lots in Whitehorse history. In partnership with the City of Whitehorse, we advanced the vision of Whistle Bend to be home for many more Yukoners with the release of 141 single family lots, one duplex lot, 11 multi-family lots, and 91 townhouse lots.

In addition to the 253 lots released, eight commercial lots were made available, which will help actualize the vision of Whistle Bend's town square. When complete, Whistle Bend will be home to about 8,000 people. The new lots in Whistle Bend will alleviate some of the immediate demand for land in Whitehorse, and we continue to work with other orders of government to ensure the ongoing availability of land in Whitehorse and in all communities. We are also investing more than \$25 million per year for the next five years to develop lots in all of the Yukon.

On the regulatory front, the Land Management branch was key to developing the off-road vehicle management area regulation approved on January 28 of this year. The new regulation creates a regime to mitigate the impacts of off-road vehicle activity on wildlife and fish habitats in sensitive ecoregions while also recognizing the needs of responsible off-road vehicle users. We are pleased to move forward on this important regulation and look forward to working with stakeholders and First Nation governments to ensure responsible use of off-road vehicles and protection of key habitat.

The Land Planning branch plans for the development of residential, commercial, and industrial land to meet the needs

of rural Yukon and the communities. They do this by developing and implementing local area planning and zoning regulations. It has been a very busy year for the Land Planning branch with several active processes ongoing.

On the regional land use planning front, the branch continues to work with its First Nations partners to implement the Peel regional land use plan, and we are working with eligible claim holders to negotiate relinquishment of the remaining mineral claims in the Peel. I spoke about this early, Madam Chair. To date, 142 claims have been relinquished, and discussions continue with the other claim holders in the area.

Our officials are also engaged with our First Nation partners and planning commissions on the Dawson regional land use plan and the Beaver River plan.

We are committed to the regional land use planning process, and we have begun to talk with other First Nations about beginning the remaining regional land use planning processes.

On the local area planning front, we are continuing to collaborate with First Nations and Yukon communities to create local area plans that consider a broad range of issues to guide development and resolve competing land use issues. We are working on local area plans for Marsh Lake, Alaska Highway west, Lu Zil Män — also known as the Fish Lake area — as well as zoning amendments for Shallow Bay and other areas. We prioritize planning where population growth and land development pressures are greatest.

The Forest Management branch develops, manages, and regulates the forest resource sector, and this includes strategic and operational planning, forest engineering, forest health and research, industry development assistance, forest inventories, reforest, and reforestation.

This year, a total of \$227,000 is budgeted for developing timber harvest areas in the Yukon, primarily the development, repair, maintenance, and decommissioning of forest roads. This work is being carried out in several areas across the territory.

We work closely with First Nations to plan how we manage forests and have collaborated on management plans for the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes, Haines Junction, Dawson, and Teslin regions. The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes forest resource management plan has been approved by the Government of Yukon, as well as two out of three First Nation governments, and the final approval will hopefully occur within the next few months.

We have entered into a funding agreement with Liard First Nation to begin the planning process there. Completing a forest resource management plan for southeast Yukon is a top priority for the branch.

Fuel-wood harvesting is an essential service for Yukoners to heat their homes and increase energy use from renewable resources, and to expand on that, we provide opportunities for Yukoners to access biomass in the form of fuel wood, timber, wood chips, lumber, and other products. Materials harvested from fuel abatement can provide opportunities for fuel-wood supply and biomass industry development. The Forest Management branch and Wildland Fire Management are working together to create more fire-resilient communities

through participation in planning, contracting, and permitting for fuel abatement activities.

In the Agriculture branch, \$534,000 has been budgeted for operating and support costs, and \$1.2 million is for transfer payments to the Canada agriculture partnership, the Yukon Agricultural Association, and for funding designated for elk fencing. There is an increase in \$386,000 in the Agriculture budget, primarily due to \$225,000 in new funding for elk fencing and increases in personnel.

There is one new full-time equivalent to assist in meat inspection and other changes in staff costs, in accordance with our collective agreement. Last year marked a significant achievement for the Agriculture branch with the completion of an updated policy that will guide the development of Yukon agriculture for the next decade.

Cultivating our Future, 2020 Yukon agriculture policy, was the result of three years of work with Yukon's agriculture producers, the public, and First Nations. The vision for the 2020 Yukon agriculture policy is to create the right conditions to increase Yukon's self-sufficiency and food production, produce high-quality products that feed our vibrant communities, contribute to our local economy, and to leave positive cultural and environmental legacies for future generations.

One of the key initiatives to assist our local agriculture capacity is the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. This agreement supports investments, adaptation, and sustainable growth in the Yukon's agricultural sector. Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Government of Canada commits to allocating \$1.5 million to Yukon agriculture each year for the five years until 2023. This funding amount includes the Government of Yukon's in-kind contributions. Many agriculture projects are eligible for 60-percent funding, with the remainder coming from the individual farmer — meaning that the \$1.5 million per year can trigger a large total investment in our farm community.

I want to talk about the Energy branch for a moment. The Energy branch develops and delivers energy projects and programs that increase the sustainability of energy use in the Yukon. The Energy branch also develops energy policy. The operation and maintenance estimates for the branch are \$10.9 million for the coming year, and this funding covers 17.3 full-time employees.

I would like to offer my personal thank you to the staff who kept the public counter running at the Energy branch over the past year. \$1.7 million covers operating and support costs and includes funding for two agreements — \$262,000 for the clean energy for rural and remote communities program, and \$557,000 for the low-carbon economy fund, supporting implementation and capacity development for energy-efficiency initiatives.

There is also \$7.3 million in transfer payment costs for the following areas: \$1.76 million for the good energy rebate program, residential energy efficiency incentive program, and the commercial energy-efficiency incentive program. The good energy program is the Energy branch's flagship rebate program, which promotes the purchase of energy-efficient and

greenhouse gas-reducing appliances, construction of energy-efficient housing, and deployment of microgeneration energy systems. The good energy program provides funding for energy-efficiency retrofits, including renewable heating systems for homes, businesses, non-profits, municipalities, and First Nations.

To date, participants in energy-efficiency rebate programs have saved enough energy to power 4,600 average Yukon homes for one year. They also saved over \$14.4 million in energy costs and avoided emitting 57,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases — which is terrific.

\$3.76 million is for the federal low-carbon economy leadership fund. The low-carbon economy leadership fund supplements the territory's funding for the good energy incentive programs to enhance support for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits to existing buildings, as well as renewable energy generation. This fund has enabled the Energy branch to expand the good energy program to support a large suite of rebates in commercial and institutional buildings.

There is also \$1.74 million in new funding for *Our Clean Future*. Thanks to *Our Clean Future* funding, the good energy programs have been extended to include clean transportation and increased support for renewable heating systems for residential, commercial, and municipal clients.

Jumping ahead to the Yukon Geological Survey, I would like to mention a few of the Yukon Geological Survey's key programs, starting with the Yukon mineral exploration program. The Yukon mineral exploration program, or YMEP, is a funding program designed to support early stage exploration. It provides a portion of the risk capital required to locate hard rock and placer mineral occurrences. The total funding for the Yukon mineral exploration program for 2021-22 will be \$1.4 million.

In other projects, for the Yukon Geological Survey, just under \$1 million from Natural Resources Canada is going toward studies in the Yukon. This includes temperature drilling and feasibility studies, mostly taking place in the southern and central Yukon regions. \$470,000 is allocated toward conducting geothermal studies in the Yukon, and \$25,000 is allocated for glacier monitoring to assess the impact of climate change on water for hydroelectricity generation. \$50,000 is going toward permafrost-thaw-related risk assessments in communities. An additional \$50,000 is going toward permafrost-thaw-related risk assessments along highways.

For the Mineral Resources branch, I wanted to talk about the \$220,000 the branch has in transfer payment costs. \$100,000 is provided to the Yukon Chamber of Mines; I thank them for their work. \$120,000 is provided to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

As I said earlier, we were up in Dawson this past Friday, along with colleagues opposite, to attend their annual general meeting.

There were 2,183 quartz claims staked in 2020 and 174,000 total quartz claims in good standing. There were 1,394 placer claims staked in 2020 and just under 28,000 total placer claims in good standing.

In 2019, there was a total of 1,425 placer claims staked. Madam Chair, let me just move on. Let's leave 2019.

In 2020, more than 82,600 ounces of placer gold were exported from the Yukon, with an approximate value of \$165 million. This represents a 15-percent increase in gold production and a 43-percent increase in value of production compared to 2019.

Junior exploration companies conducted the majority of mineral exploration in the Yukon. Exploration activity contributes significantly to Yukon's economic development and growth.

Last September, Natural Resources Canada updated 2020 spending intentions for exploration and deposit appraisals to a predicted amount of just under \$77 million. A comparison of Natural Resources Canada 2020 pre- and post-COVID-19 estimates indicate that the territories experienced a significant drop in expenditures as a result of the pandemic. The Yukon was the least impacted at a 21.5-percent drop versus the Northwest Territories, which had a nearly 30-percent drop and Nunavut had an over 40-percent drop.

Madam Chair, I just want to talk about the Strategic Alliances branch for a moment and the Yukon-wide mineral development strategy, which came up in Question Period again today.

As part of the process, the independent mineral development strategy panel was established in September 2019 to undertake an engagement process and develop recommendations. I would like to thank the panel for presenting their report last month, and the Government of Yukon will now work with its partners to evaluate the final mineral development strategy and determine next steps for possible implementation. This will include discussions with First Nations as well as with the mineral industry.

We believe that implementation of a final mineral development strategy should strike a balance between community development, environmental stewardship, and economic prosperity while respecting the rights and traditions Yukon First Nations.

So, Madam Chair, as you can see, the branch is very diverse and there is much going on. My apologies for all of the material that I edited out. I'm sorry that I wasn't briefer, but I look forward to questions from members opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for his opening remarks, and I thank Mr. Bailey and Ms. Abercrombie for attending here today, as well as for them and the other officials who provided us with the briefing on the mains and the supplementary and some general policy questions with respect to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. I would have asked in the briefing some of the questions that I will ask here of the minister, but I am just looking to get them on record.

We will start with the full-time equivalent numbers. According to the briefing documents that we received, there are 287.7 full-time equivalents, or FTEs, in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Can the minister tell us how much of an increase that was from 2020-21? We were told at the briefing that 16 percent of those individuals — just rough math for me — approximately 46 individuals are still working

from home. If the minister could confirm that number as well, that would be great.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** In terms of new employees this year, compared to last year, we have eight new full-time equivalents. These positions are all term-funded. Seven of them are linked to *Our Clean Future*, and one is, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, linked to support of the meat inspections in the territory.

I think that I missed one other question by the member opposite, but I will catch it in a second.

**Mr. Kent:** The second part of that question was — again, at the briefing, the number that I think we were given, and I think that the officials were going to confirm it for us — 16 percent of the staff are still working from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I just wanted the minister to confirm that this is the number, and then how many bodies does that actually represent, as far as the number of FTEs who are still working from home?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, that number is correct. We still have 16 percent working from home, and we will work to get the exact number of people that it is or the equivalent of that. When I get back up in a later question, I will share the number on the record for the member opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** Just for the minister, of those individuals who are still working from home, is there a plan for some or all — or a portion of them, I guess — to transition back to the workplace as we hopefully move out of this pandemic and back to a normal existence here in the territory and country and in the world? I am just curious if that is in the works as well — transitioning those who are still at home back to the office.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We are working to transition people back, but I would like to note that the immediate step is to allow for that, but there is also this opportunity that we have — more broadly — to support people if they wish to continue working from home. I think that it may be a question if the Public Service Commission is called here in debate, but that is a broader strategy that I think we debated here in this Legislature previously.

**Mr. Kent:** If it is today or in a legislative return providing those numbers of individuals who are still working from home, could he also perhaps give us a sense of how many of those staff at Energy, Mines and Resources would be eligible to continue working from home and how many of them they are trying to get back into the office? That would be great.

I am going to explore a number of different topics with the minister here this afternoon. I wanted to start with land use planning, whether it is the larger regional planning processes that are underway or some of the smaller local area plans that are underway. First of all, I wanted to ask — and I did ask in Question Period, I think, last week — about the Beaver River land use plan.

When I went on the Government of Yukon website and downloaded some documents, according to the fall 2020 update — this is the Beaver River land use plan and agreement work plan. Phase 2 — a background report was to be completed in October 2020. Phase 3, which is a planning framework — again, completion was October 2020. Phase 4, which was an

analysis and draft plan, was to be completed in January 2021. The final draft plan was to be completed in March 2021. Then, of course, the final plan completion was to be determined by the parties.

I'm just curious: Are we on target for, I guess, what should have been phase 2, phase 3, and phase 4 — which should already be done — and has the final draft plan, as was on the website last week, been completed in March 2021? Does the minister have a copy of that in his possession, or has it been forwarded to the parties — the final draft plan?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank the member opposite. I did ask the department to check on the website, and I did ask for an update on the status of this. I was briefed this morning about it. It is delayed somewhat. Let me just pull up my note, Madam Chair. We have hit some of the important milestones. To date, the committee has developed the road access management plan, the wildlife adaptive monitoring plan, and has completed three stages of the public and stakeholder consultations. The land use plan is currently being drafted by the committee, and land designation discussions, such as identifying conservation areas, are underway between the Yukon government and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun.

Based on recent discussions with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, it suggests that they will need more time to prepare mapping that reflects input from their citizens and interests on potential conservation areas. I know that it is delayed somewhat. I don't know exactly what the timeline is, although I know that it is not in my possession — I don't have any draft of it. As that work evolves, I'm happy to try to report back on what that timeline looks like.

**Mr. Kent:** When this was first announced coming out of PDAC in March 2018, it was mentioned in the news release at the time that it would be a two-year process. Even had the final plan been completed in March 2021, we are a year late on this already. I think that it is starting to affect investment and decisions by mining companies that are active in the area. It is unfortunate, I guess, that the minister doesn't know when to expect the final draft plan. Hopefully, the website at least gets updated so that those interested in this can take a look at it. Obviously, there is also a final opportunity for planned review by the public, and indeed citizens and stakeholders, that is part of that delivery of the final draft plan. That is going to take time as well, so we could be a couple of years past the initial deadline of March 2020 before the end. Again, we are more than three years after this work was to have been started in March 2018. I know that there are a number of individuals who are getting quite anxious to see this finished.

The minister did mention the road access management plan — and I think the fish and wildlife monitoring and adaptive management plan — as being completed. Can he just confirm that he did, in fact, say that those two documents were complete now?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I do want to acknowledge a couple of things. Land planning at any time is tough. I mean, look at how long the Peel took. It took many, many years over what was originally hoped for, I'm sure. It is important that we get it right. I know that there are tensions around the issues. I know

that Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has been working on this. The community has been working on it.

Also, I will say — and members opposite earlier suggested that it wasn't a fair excuse to say that COVID delayed things, but it has delayed things. I know that ATAC Resources has been in correspondence with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and is working to find sort of a facilitated meeting to work through some of the issues that they still have, and we are supportive of that, and we will continue to do that work.

I did say a moment ago that there is a road access management plan and wildlife adaptation monitoring plan that have been developed, but there are also those stages of public consultation that are still there. I don't want to suggest that, with those elements having been drafted, there isn't still an opportunity for people to provide input; I believe there is.

So, those are the elements — I have been briefed — that have been developed.

**Mr. Kent:** Just for the minister with respect to talking about what COVID delays were, that was during Question Period today, and it was a question about municipal staking bans that were initiated by his predecessor four and a half years ago. I felt that the one year and a few months that we've been in the pandemic wasn't an excuse for the almost three and a half years of inaction. But I do have some questions about that a little bit later on.

Just back to this road access management plan and the monitoring and adaptive management plan for fish and wildlife, the draft plans are done. I'm just trying to make sure so that we can communicate this to some of the stakeholders that have asked us. The draft plans are done, but is there still public engagement and stakeholder engagement that is required on both of these documents?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** That is correct. The two plans — the road access management plan and the wildlife adaptive monitoring plan — are drafted. We know that there is still one more round of engagement with the public that will come. I believe that we have completed three stages of that consultation and one more is coming. When that one happens, it will be on the overall draft of the Beaver River land use plan. The public or industry will be able to comment on the whole of the plan, which includes these subplans.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for that. We look forward to an announcement on perhaps when that final round of consultations and being able to look at these documents will take place.

I did want to ask about the Dawson regional plan. The minister can provide us with an update on where that plan is at and what documents he is expecting in the next while from that planning commission.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just to go back to answer an earlier question, I am told that we have 44 employees who are working remotely. When I say that, Madam Chair, they are not all working entirely remotely. Some of them work part time from home and part time in the office, so it's a blend. It can be anywhere from one to five days per week that they work remotely.

In response to the question, I won't have an answer right now about how many we are moving back or not, and I'm sure some of that is how the department will manage and work with them, so I don't have a number that I can give. What I can say is that we will be working with them to bring them back. If there are specifics, I can try to get more information for the member opposite.

The other thing that I'll say with respect to closing off the conversation around the Beaver River land use plan is that I hope to have a conversation shortly with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. As soon as I get a sense from them and from the department about what their timing is, I would be happy to let not only the members of the House know but also the industry what the timelines look like. I appreciate that everybody is looking to see this through, and I will check to make sure that everybody is working diligently toward that end.

With respect to the Dawson regional land use plan, I think that it's very soon that a draft should be out. I don't have a specific date, but I do think that it's still overall on track for the timeline that I had, at least, for a final recommended plan in 2022. I know that the commission has been working hard, and I'm anticipating that we will hear from them fairly soon with their draft plan.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for mentioning that the final recommended plan is due in 2022 and mentioning that the commission is expecting the draft plan — the draft plan still has not been delivered yet as well.

As part of the confidence and supply agreement that the Yukon Liberals signed with the Yukon NDP, there is a piece in here with respect to land use planning. Often, in Question Period with the limited time, we don't get the opportunity to read the entire section. This is section 4, "Policy Initiatives". This is on page five, so it is section 4.3.d., which states: "The Yukon Liberal government and Yukon NDP Caucus are committed to accelerate the pace at which the Land Use Planning (LUP) process, mandated under Chapter 11 of the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, takes place. As such, adequate resources will be committed to complete ongoing LUP processes and to initiate new LUP processes and to initiate new LUP processes as agreed to with First Nation governments."

I am curious if the minister can tell us what the timeline looks like to initiate these new processes and what the agreement means by "adequate resources will be committed" to complete the processes. How much money is the minister estimating this will cost to accelerate these final land use planning processes?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, what I will say is that this is one of the files that is actively being developed at the Yukon Forum in conjunction with First Nations. I know that we are in active conversation with the federal government as well. Energy, Mines and Resources is one of the departments, but not the only department, that is working on this front.

I am not going to have specific details that I am able share with the member opposite today. What I can say — for example, when I had a conversation with the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we talked about how we would be resourcing this

ourselves, for our part in it — working with the federal government to make sure that they are resourcing land use planning — because, more or less, the land use planning dollars that were originally allocated are gone because the Peel land use plan took so long and was costly — it went to court. So, those things changed what was there in the bank, and so we are working with our federal counterparts right now to make sure that they are with us — and working with First Nations to identify priorities.

I know that we have another Yukon Forum coming up shortly, and I am looking forward to that conversation, but I don't have specifics that I can share today.

**Mr. Kent:** Just the last part of that quote from the agreement with the New Democratic Party caucus — it was to initiate new land use planning processes agreed to with First Nation governments.

I want the minister to clarify: Are those regional land use planning processes, or are other local area plans like — he mentioned a few — Marsh Lake, Fish Lake, and Alaska Highway west or even the Beaver River watershed plan, which is a sub-regional plan — are those also being contemplated as part of this new process, or is it just for ones that are set aside as regional ones that are being contemplated as part of this piece of the agreement with the NDP?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** No, this is primarily talking about chapter 11 — a portion of the final agreements. We are thinking of the regional land use plans. That is what I think is contemplated here, but in terms of acceleration — as the member opposite noted — and the new land use planning processes, one of the things that I think might be contemplated there is the ability to run more than one regional land use plan process at a time. So, rather than them just sequencing, as we have been doing so far, maybe one of the ways that we can move them more quickly is by having more than one land use planning process underway at a time now.

I don't want to say today what exactly that will be, but that's a way in which we could have a new approach to the land use planning process that we haven't had to date and that would allow us to accelerate things while abiding by chapter 11.

That conversation, as I said previously, will come out of dialogue at the Yukon Forum. I'm looking forward to that conversation. Just to be clear for the member opposite, I think that all that is being referenced here is regional land use plans.

**Mr. Kent:** We'll look forward to revisiting this with the minister once he has had a chance to talk to other levels of government and get a better sense of the resources that will be required to accelerate this and have multiple plans proceeding at the same time, as he mentioned.

I do want to talk about successor resource legislation. Obviously, the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* are foundational pieces of legislation for the mining industry, whether it's placer miners or those involved in hardrock mining. Again, I'm going to quote the entire passage from the agreement with the NDP. This is section 4.3.c. It reads: "To meet the commitment to Yukoners made at the time of devolution, successor legislation for the mining sector is required. Subject to meaningful consultations with Yukon First

Nations, the Yukon Liberal Government and the Yukon NDP Caucus will develop and implement such legislation during the term of this agreement.”

We’ve been asking about this in Question Period. The term of this agreement — I think that it runs through January 31, 2023. For us, in order to meet this commitment, the Liberal government would have those two pieces of legislation on the floor in about 16 months’ time, which is the Fall Sitting prior to the expiration of this agreement.

Can the minister confirm that this is the case, that they intend to have these two pieces of legislation on the floor of the Assembly here by the fall of 2022?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The member opposite just read it, and so let me just emphasize the point that he just read: “Subject to meaningful consultations with Yukon First Nations...” is what is there in the agreement. That’s the work that’s underway right now. So, we have a successor resource legislation working group that is developed out of the Yukon Forum. That work is underway, and I think everyone will make best efforts, but we’re saying that we need to be respectful of process here. We acknowledge that there is process to be followed, and we will work to follow it.

**Mr. Kent:** So, is the minister saying that there’s a chance that this legislation will not be on the floor of the Assembly by the fall of 2022? Again, I’m just reading what’s in this document, and it says: “Subject to meaningful consultations with Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Liberal Government and the Yukon NDP Caucus will develop and implement such legislation during the term of this agreement.” It’s pretty explicit from a timing perspective.

I mentioned earlier in Question Period today, when I was reviewing the final mineral development strategy, that they felt four years was an aggressive timeline for legislation and regulations on these two pieces of legislation. That’s why we felt — and going back to last week, as well, we felt that 16 months was unrealistic to get these two pieces of legislation rewritten and on the floor of the Assembly.

I’m just hoping that the minister can confirm that there is no timeline to get these pieces of legislation on the floor by next fall, and then he did mention the successor resource legislation working group. I’m curious if the NDP caucus will be part of that working group — just flowing — because again, I’m reading here that the Liberals and the NDP will develop and implement such legislation. So, is the NDP part of the successor resource legislation working group as well?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Premier will issue me a mandate letter, and that mandate letter will give me responsibility to try to move all of this forward. I take it as: “Here’s what we will work to achieve.”

I have already noted right away that the language of the agreement that we have with the NDP says that there are certain conditions that we need to meet, and we will work to try to meet those, but I can’t predict the future. That is not my job; my job is to work hard. I don’t know the answer to the question about the NDP being part of the successor resource legislation working group.

I should note that it is not one, for example, that I sit on all the time. It is public servants who work on those groups and report back. As part of the agreement, it talks about how we will work constructively together, and I will look for those opportunities. That group is a government-to-government group, and part of that, of course, is that I would need to also talk with our partners at the Yukon Forum — the First Nation governments — about what they wish to do and how they wish to see that work unfold.

So, respectfully, all that I am here to do today is to say that we are going to work hard toward successor legislation and that the successor legislation must require us to work closely with First Nations. I have also committed to working closely with industry, and I will continue to make those commitments.

**Mr. Kent:** I know — recognizing, of course, that I have a number of questions — and I will turn the floor over to my colleagues from the Third Party a little bit later on this afternoon before we adjourn — but there is some language in this — words matter, Madam Chair — and there are some words in this confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the NDP with respect to developing successor resource legislation. It seems to me like the minister is saying that these two pieces of legislation will not — or there is a chance that they will not — be on the floor of this House before this agreement expires. I would have thought that the wording in this — instead of saying that the Yukon Liberal government and the Yukon NDP caucus “... will develop and implement such legislation during the term of this agreement...” — why doesn’t the wording perhaps say that the Yukon Liberal government and the Yukon NDP caucus “may develop and implement such legislation during the term of this agreement”?

As I said, to me, words are important, especially in a document that is signed between two parties to ensure that the government will continue to stand and won’t be brought down on any confidence matters. I’m just curious why the wording is so definitive in the CASA, but the minister is less definitive in his commitment to develop and implement this legislation during the term of this agreement.

I’ll ask just another question as part of that. During Question Period last week, the minister said that, while there weren’t new resources in this budget to accomplish the drafting of these two pieces of legislation, there were existing resources. If he could let us know what line we would find those in or how much in existing resources are in the budget that was tabled prior to the election that he mentioned — again, the main question is with respect to what really comes down to this one word — that this legislation “will” be developed during the term of this agreement. As I mentioned, that would mean that it would be on the floor in the fall of next year.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I think that Yukoners sent a clear message that we should all try to work together for the benefit of the territory, and that’s what we’re committed to doing. The member wants me to talk about one word in the sentence — the word “will”. But the sentence starts with: “Subject to meaningful consultations...”; that’s how it starts. I think the word “will” then has to at least — it’s amazing to me

that I'm debating the word — words do matter. I agree with the member opposite.

So, you have to read the whole sentence. It reads: "Subject to meaningful consultations with Yukon First Nations..." I just stood up and said that we would talk with First Nations about how this process would unfold because that's what's important.

I think the word "will" in this case just indicates that I should work hard, or the department should work hard, to try to achieve this and that this is important, because the word "may" would sound pretty wishy-washy. It's like, "Yeah, if I want to or I don't." No, we are going to get to successor legislation. We should work to bring it here as quickly as possible while respecting the need to have meaningful consultations with First Nations. I will work to get a number.

The opposition House Leader also asked about resources. Many of the resources required already exist within departmental budgets, although they may not be specifically identified as being dedicated to this legislative project. These include salaries, travel, communications, program materials, and funds for participation of First Nations.

I have asked the department if they could sort of try to identify what that level of funding is and how much goes toward these types of projects, like legislation. It is not usually pulled apart exactly that way within the department, so it is a little bit tricky, but I am asking the department to help get information to support the member opposite's wishes to understand what those resources are.

**Mr. Kent:** To me, it looks like, again — "subject to meaningful consultations" — I get that part. The way we read this and the way we were discussing this in Question Period — and the Premier committed to living up to what was said in this document. It now appears to me, unless the minister can confirm otherwise, that perhaps these two major pieces of legislation will not be ready for the fall of 2022. Quite frankly, my colleagues and I believe that those are timelines that cannot be met. I mean, these are foundational pieces of legislation for the success and responsible operation of those two industries. I think that rushing them would be foolhardy. That's why, when I first read this agreement, I was surprised to see such an aggressive timeline in here. With that said, I guess we will see what happens and what unfolds.

I do have another question, and the minister may or may not be able to answer this; it might be the Premier or another one of the minister's colleagues. Under section 3, "Collaboration", the third one does speak about the Yukon Forum. It says: "A letter will be sent to the First Nations members of the Yukon Forum requesting the full participation of the Leader of the Yukon NDP Caucus. The letter will be jointly signed by the Premier of Yukon and the Leader of the Yukon NDP Caucus and sent no later than May 15, 2021."

So, if the minister knows — and if he doesn't know, I can appreciate that — that this letter was sent and if there was a response received from the First Nation members of the Yukon Forum.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am not aware of the letter, whether it has been sent or not. I am sure that the Premier would be happy to respond. I am just checking across the floor with

my colleagues to see if we know. I am not aware, and I am sure that the Premier would be happy to respond.

**Mr. Kent:** I know that the minister attended a briefing with the Yukon Chamber of Mines shortly after being appointed minister. I attended, and the Leader of the Official Opposition also attended that meeting remotely. One of the things that they had mentioned with respect to successor resource legislation was that, in order for it to be successful, industry must be fully engaged in the process. They followed up in a letter, I believe, to the Leader of the Official Opposition, suggesting that they would be looking for a seat at the drafting table. I know that I asked the minister about this in Question Period, but as I have mentioned often, there is not a lot of time. You don't have the support of the officials to answer those types of questions, so I am curious what kind of engagement the minister is considering for industry and how they will be involved in this process — whether it takes 16 months or four years, as suggested by the mineral development strategy, to complete.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It was a really good meeting — the first meeting with the Yukon Chamber of Mines — if I can just give them a bit of a shout-out. It was really articulate. It was focused on their key concerns, and we worked through a lot of ground very quickly and we acknowledge that there was much work to do.

What I said to them is what I will say here today — or hopefully I will paraphrase it fairly. We certainly want industry engagement. We are working with them to see how we can do that effectively. What I also said is that there is a part of this — when, for example, it is a government-to-government table, I will respect that government-to-government table.

I'm not expecting to create an extra seat. What we do want to do is to make sure that the industry has the ability to provide advice early and often so that, if we're moving down a path, we have a sense of what the industry's concerns, opportunities, and ideas are so that we're not doing the work in the absence of their input. But there will be lots of opportunity when they actually are at the table. I heard loud and clear that the interest was there. I stood in the Legislature in response to one of the questions from Question Period, I think, for the Leader of the Official Opposition. I said that I felt that the Third Party was interested in that as well. It was pointed out that it's not there exactly in the wording of the agreement between us and the Third Party. However, there is wording in there that talks in generalities about how to work constructively. I took it from this that the Third Party was also interested in having industry involved as seamlessly and effectively as possible. I think that makes all three of the parties here in the Legislature that would like to see that happen. I will continue to do my best to make that so.

**Mr. Kent:** One of the other things that was brought up by the Yukon Chamber of Mines with respect to the confidence and supply agreement was the Yukon Climate Leadership Council. The Chamber of Mines wanted to represent the exploration and mining industry on the council. I'm curious if the minister was asked about that at his meeting with the chamber and what his response to the chamber was.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I was asked about that by the chamber. They did make that generous offer, and I would love to take them up on that offer. I hope to work alongside other colleagues here — the Minister of Environment — on the Climate Leadership Council. I think that it's really important that we have industry there.

I will note that mining is a key industry but certainly not the only industry representation that I would like to see on that panel. There are a number of other sectors that would have a good voice there and a chance to help us work together to achieve our targets.

What I said to the chamber was “Thank you very much” and I do hope that they are one of those voices at the table.

**Mr. Kent:** I'm going to step back into the Liberal-NDP agreement here for a second. Reading in “Appendix A — Consultation and Dispute Resolution between the Yukon NDP Caucus and the Yukon Liberal Government”, going down to measure 3, the lead-in to this is: “In practice, this requires both parties to work together in good faith to...” Number 3 under that is: “Ensure that the Yukon NDP Caucus is informed about the policy agenda of the government. The Yukon Liberal Government agrees to provide access to:

“a. Deputy minister and ministry staff briefings;

“b. Executive summaries and full briefings on key issues as requested by the Yukon NDP Caucus;

“c. Adequate background documents and support information used in the preparation of initiatives;

“d. Other resources as necessary to enable informed participation by the Yukon NDP Caucus.”

I'm curious if any of these particular aspects of the CASA between the Liberals and the New Democrats have been utilized with respect to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Have any of these briefings taken place? If so, are you able to tell us which ones?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I just want to acknowledge that Energy, Mines and Resources is one of many departments in the government — and certainly not the only one — that is working with this agreement. I don't know of any briefings, as of yet, of Energy, Mines and Resources with the Third Party.

Right now, I will stand and apologize to the Leader of the Third Party, because she sent me an e-mail some time ago that required me to respond, and in all of the hubbub, I had sent it off to the department to get some response, but I hadn't even acknowledged her letter, so I will just do that right here, right now.

Madam Chair, we don't have anything that has happened as of yet, but I'm looking forward to that. I said earlier — and I believe this to be true — that, in the election — and I think that the principal form of democracy in our territory is an election — Yukoners sent a clear message that we should all try to work together for the benefit of the territory.

That is what we are committed to doing, and that is what this agreement talks about. I am happy to have the agreement and to work with the Third Party.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, I can appreciate that Energy, Mines and Resources is but one department, but some of the

aspects in this document — it is a seven-page document, and I have mentioned, obviously, the successor resource legislation and accelerated land use planning. Those are but two of the initiatives. There is an increase in the greenhouse gas-emission reduction target from a 30-percent reduction to 45-percent reduction. So, Energy, Mines and Resources, through that and sprinkled throughout the document, plays an important role in this.

The minister referenced a letter from the Leader of the Third Party. Since he referenced it on the floor of the Assembly, is he able to inform us what that is about, or is it of a confidential nature?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The letter was talking about agriculture. I will have to look it up. I apologize. I would have to read it again to understand what the specifics were, but it is about agriculture. I think we have heard from all parties here about the importance of agriculture for the sustainability of the territory.

Madam Chair, yes, the confidence and supply agreement between the Yukon Liberal caucus and the Yukon NDP caucus is seven pages long, and it does contain some important references to Energy, Mines and Resources. I will also say that our part of the budget is 70 pages long — Energy, Mines and Resources — and there are some great things in there that might be of some interest as well. These are all important, so I am happy to stand and answer questions about the agreement and about the budget, too.

**Mr. Kent:** With due respect to the minister, I did ask a couple budget-related questions that are part of this — about resources for successor resource legislation development and how much the land use planning acceleration would cost — and the minister was unable to answer those. He did commit to get back, and I appreciate that. I recognize that we are here to talk about the budget, but there are budgetary implications for this agreement that was signed between the two parties.

Just to close the loop with the letter from the Leader of the Third Party regarding agriculture, if there is information in there that the minister believes is important to the House, I hope he would provide the Official Opposition with of a copy of his response as well. Obviously, agriculture is important in many of the ridings that we represent, so if there is information in there that would help us in communicating with our constituents, we would appreciate a copy of that response.

I wanted to turn to the mineral development strategy for a little bit here. We talked last week about free-entry and successor resource legislation, and the minister referenced the mineral development strategy in both of those answers. Again, I asked earlier in Question Period today. It seemed to us at the time that, by referencing the MDS as part of the answers last week, we were expecting the government to adopt and endorse the mineral development strategy.

Can the minister confirm if that is indeed the plan, to adopt and endorse the recommendations that were made by the mineral development strategy panel?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I would be happy to share the information from the department regarding agriculture to the Official Opposition as well; it is no problem.



With respect to the mineral development strategy, I stood up — I think today in the Legislature — and said that we are not adopting the whole of the strategy as it was drafted and presented to us. We are working with First Nations, with industry, and with other stakeholders who are interested in this issue and will work from that as a starting point. So, if I can just be clear, what has happened is that the strategy has created an important conversation from which we will move forward.

We are not adopting it as a whole. I have now had — and I will have to go back and count them — but probably more than five questions asking me specific details about whether we accept or support this one specific detail, and as I have said every time, as I stood in the Legislature, we are not using the Legislature to say, “Yes, that is one detail and we’re adopting it.” We want to use the process of engagement with Yukoners around the mineral development strategy in order to move forward from it. So, that is the plan, and it is not that we adopt it as a whole; it is the starting point for a conversation.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the minister for that clarity here this afternoon, because as I mentioned, sometimes it’s difficult in Question Period, given the limited time, to get that level of detail out.

So, now the government is not adopting the whole strategy, yet this was something that I believe came out as a partnership between the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations. I believe that the Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon government were partners in developing this. So, does the minister know which parts of the strategy that he’s not adopting or which part of the strategy he is adopting? Whichever list is shorter, I guess, would be the easiest way for him to let us know here this afternoon. This is certainly interesting news, and as far as I can tell, it’s new for us that the government will not be adopting the entire MDS strategy.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The process was developed from the mining memorandum of understanding, which was an agreement between us, as a government, and I believe that it was the chiefs who signed on to it, including the Council of Yukon First Nations. That is where that originated.

The notion was to create an independent panel that would make recommendations. That is what we have now. I think that the panel released their document publicly last month, on April 15, and now we will work to see which of those recommendations we want to adapt or which ones we wish to modify, and that isn’t a unilateral decision by us, as a government. That will be a conversation that we have. We want to engage with industry and the public to hear their feedback and to see which ones various groups support and which ones they don’t and how that can come together.

What came out of the mining MOU table was that the mineral development strategy be struck as an independent panel from us, and that’s what happened. Now we have that report, and we can all see it. It’s out there for everyone to take a look at, and from there, we will move forward.

**Mr. Kent:** So, the NDP-Liberal agreement does reference some of the things that are in the mineral development strategy, such as successor resource legislation. So, obviously that is one of the recommendations that is being

advanced. Obviously, there are some time considerations, given the fact that the Liberals are trying to get this tabled within 16 months so that it’s tabled before the expiration of this agreement.

Just because this is new information for me this afternoon that has been presented by the minister, who has definitively said that they will not be adopting the entire strategy, have they had those initial conversations with First Nations yet to let them know which parts of the strategy they won’t be adopting or which parts they’re particularly concerned about before this broader engagement with industry and the public occurs?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I should acknowledge that we always had it as our plan to move to successor legislation. We campaigned on it; it was part of our platform. That has been an intent that predates the agreement with the Third Party. I just want to make it clear that it has always been our intention to get to successor legislation. It’s easy for me to stand up and talk about the importance of it.

The Member for Copperbelt South asked whether we’ve already indicated to First Nation governments what elements of the mineral development strategy that we’re supportive of. No, that has not happened as of yet. The two levels at which this works — at my level — we will be meeting with the Yukon Forum shortly, and we will have that conversation.

Second of all, I talked about the working group that already exists. As I understand it, or as the department has informed me, they have not yet had conversations at that table to talk about elements of the mineral development strategy from either side.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to clarify then with the minister, are First Nation governments and officials finding out here this afternoon that the Liberals aren’t planning on adopting the whole strategy as presented? I just want to clarify that the minister has mentioned that there haven’t been discussions with First Nations; there is an upcoming Yukon Forum; there haven’t been discussions at the officials’ table. So, again, that leads me to think that they are finding out here, just like we did for the first time this afternoon, that the Liberals are not planning on adopting the mineral development strategy in its entirety.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The answer is no. Our partners through the Yukon Forum and First Nation governments are not finding out today about our highest level response to the mineral development strategy. We wrote to the panel. I am not sure whether the members opposite have this letter, but I will quote from it. This is a letter to the panel dated February 22, 2021. It is signed by the Deputy Minister responsible for the Executive Council Office and the then-Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and it talks about the context of the strategy and our response — and I quote: “Our submission provides comments on a number of broad themes, potential omissions, specific policy issues and important implementation considerations. We offer our review in the spirit of commitment to the Mineral Development Strategy process and in respect of the independence of the Panel.” I think that we said that fairly publicly. I believe that

our partners — the First Nation governments — are well aware of that.

We have even put some of that up on our website, so I think that information is all pretty public.

**Mr. Kent:** Can the minister confirm for us that this letter sent from the Yukon government was with respect to consultations on the draft agreement, and then the final agreement has come out subsequent to that? So, what aspects of the letter — particularly the EMR ones, I guess, because obviously it was the Deputy Minister responsible for the Executive Council Office, who also said — what aspects of that letter did not appear in the final agreement?

Again, the information that we're getting here today that the final strategy that came out post-election will not be adopted in whole by the government is interesting, because the minister can't tell us what aspects of the final plan — I know there are a number of different recommendations in there, but he can't specifically tell us which ones they're not happy with. Are they reflected in this letter? Can he just give us a sense of the timing here? When will he be announcing which recommendations that the government is not willing to adopt that were presented by the panel?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The draft came out, we provided some of our feedback, and then the final was released on April 15. I'm sure that there was some change, but I think that it wasn't a large-scale change between the draft and the final. Our submission is up on the mineral development strategy panel website.

If we want to take the time, I can start reading through it here for the Legislature, but I think it's fair to say that it's there in public view. I'm happy to dive in, if that's what we want to do, and talk about it. I will rely pretty heavily on colleagues here — the deputy minister — because I was not involved at that stage, but I'm happy to look backward and get that information.

I think we have been pretty open all along that the strategy, while it has many redeeming features to it — we have never said that we would adopt it whole. We have given every indication that it is a place to work from, and that's the indication that we have given to First Nations and the public.

**Mr. Kent:** I guess, with due respect to the minister, that response that he correctly referenced is on the MDS website and is in response to the draft plan. Obviously, the final plan, as he mentioned, was released in mid-April, after the election.

What we would be looking for is the response with concerns on the final plan. Obviously, that has not been made public. What has been made public is that the Liberal government will not be adopting the entire strategy. I guess we could look back to the response that was made on the draft agreement and try to get a sense — cross-referencing what was taken was out — what concerns were addressed by the time the final strategy was released. But I guess what we would be looking for is that statement from the government on what concerns they have with the final mineral development strategy and which aspect they will not be adopting, as part of what was presented in mid-April.

I will move on from that and look forward to having that made public at some point. I would hope that it would be done, obviously, prior to the adjournment of the Spring Sitting, but it is quite short. We are done on Monday, May 31, so perhaps it won't be then, but I do look forward to getting a sense on that and seeing exactly what aspects will not be adopted by the government.

I have a couple of other questions though — more general questions about the MDS. One of the concerns that we had was that the panel either didn't have the time or the resources to give us a true indication of what the cost to government would be with respect to additional FTEs or additional resources for many of the things that they're asking government to do, or what the cost would be to industry on a holistic level, what the overall cost of adding a water tax, a payroll tax, and additional fees and agreements and the other things that were identified in there would be.

Is that an exercise that the government is going to undertake? Is that something, I guess, that would be led by EMR to cost out the mineral development strategy so that they can make an informed decision on exactly what the growth of government would be and then, again, the holistic costs to industry?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** That would be part of our work with the industry to do that. I don't think it will be just — it may be led by Energy, Mines and Resources, but I think there would be other departments involved — even the Department of Finance, for example. There will be a group of departments that will work to prepare what the impacts will be, both financial and otherwise, from a policy perspective.

There may be a range of impacts. We will work with industry to develop that, but of course, some of that depends on what the choices are toward successor legislation. We can start to see some of the path, but it may take time for some of those differences to be realized. That work will be ongoing.

**Mr. Kent:** Again, last week, when we asked the minister whether or not he supported the free-entry system — I should note, as well, that when we asked a similar question during the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly — obviously the one before the election — the Premier and the minister — or the minister I think it was at the time — indicated that they did support the free-entry system. The new minister was a little less certain of that. He referenced a modified free-entry system. I think that was part of the mineral development strategy. I'm curious if he can tell us what, exactly, he meant by a "modified free-entry system" for securing mineral tenure in the territory or for staking claims.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Actually, Madam Chair, what I did the other day, when the members opposite asked about free-entry, was I referenced what I had seen within the mineral development strategy, just as a starting point. I noted that the strategy made several comments — I don't know, I think I found it on a half dozen pages or so — where it talked about the free-entry system, and I talked about what was in the strategy. I wasn't talking about what my position was. I'm not even sure that it's my position per se. I'm happy that we work as a government across departments to develop some analysis

of what successor legislation should look like. I'm happy that we work with other governments. I'm happy that we work with industry. I'm not here on the floor of the Legislature to start to say "Yeah, this is in; this is out", because that process should be with that engagement with our partners. It's not just us who will do that.

So, I appreciate that the Official Opposition has already made up their mind that free-entry is in. But you know, when I read that in their platform, or around some of their correspondence, I'm still scratching my head. What does that mean for them? Is that including Tombstone Park, or is that out?

There are aspects of free entry that they do not support, but they are not spelling that out. I am more concerned that they are trying to move us into a corner. The place that I have said, and continue to say, is that, with the mineral development strategy, we will work through the process that we laid out, starting with the mining MOU and working forward with First Nations, with industry, et cetera. We are not taking a position. All I was doing was referencing what is in the mineral development strategy, as it was presented to us.

**Mr. Kent:** Again, for the minister — and I will dig up the exact quote. I do not have it with me; it is from Hansard, but during the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislature, the Liberal government — the minister at the time or the Premier, one of the two — said that they did support free-entry. Now, last week, during Question Period, the minister referenced a "modified free-entry system". I think Yukoners, and especially those who are prospectors or involved in staking claims, need to know from this minister what exactly he meant by a "modified free-entry system". He said it in Question Period, so we are quite curious as to what exactly he is talking about when he talks about a modified free-entry system.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I just stood a moment ago, and I said what I was referencing was the mineral development strategy. Let me quote from the mineral development strategy right here, right now. And I will check back through Hansard to see exactly what my words were to make sure it was clear enough. I believe, when I spoke about free-entry, I was referencing what was in the mineral development strategy. So, for Hansard, I am on page 19 of the mineral development strategy.

So, here I am — for Hansard, I am on page 19 of the mineral development strategy. Now I'm quoting: "Ensuring the new mineral resource legislation and regulations are aligned with Yukon's modern treaties, Canada's *Constitution Act*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and current case law by:

"acknowledging the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent;

"modifying the free entry staking system to be consistent with Yukon's modern treaties, court-guided agreements and case law..." — I'll stop there. I won't read the full quote, but what I'm saying is that I stood in the Legislature during Question Period and referenced the mineral development

strategy. That's what I'm talking about here. There are questions around it.

Now, when I referenced it, what I'm saying as well is that, when the Official Opposition says that they support free-entry staking, I have my own questions on what they mean by that. So, I would be happy — as we engage on this issue, moving forward — to pick up all that input — the Opposition, industry, First Nation governments. That's what I want to do, and free-entry is an important question inside the whole picture of how we move toward successor legislation.

That was my reference then; it's my reference today. I'm not taking a position on free-entry staking. What I'm doing is taking a position that we will work through this process with First Nation governments and industry.

**Mr. Kent:** I appreciate the minister flagging that piece of the MDS that he was speaking about. We'll review Hansard, as well, and come back if we need to with respect to this particular one, because modifying the free-entry staking system to be consistent with Yukon's modern treaties, court-guided agreements, and case law, as he mentioned, will be something that we can follow up with the minister on when the government announces which portions of the strategy and recommendations they are going to endorse and which ones they are not going to endorse with respect to the final document that we have.

I just wanted to ask about — again, this comes from the Chamber of Mines meeting that they had with all three parties. I'm curious about land withdrawals and the staking bans. The documents that were presented to us by the Chamber of Mines say that 52 percent of Yukon land is currently withdrawn from mineral staking. Parks and protected areas total a little bit greater than 60,000 square kilometres; prohibition *Quartz Mining Act* OICs, or regulation with prohibition of entry areas, are 188,000 square kilometres, or 39 percent of the Yukon. The parks and protected areas were 13 percent. Not included are Yukon wetlands withdrawals. The MDS recommends a 20-percent limit as a moratorium to use during each land use planning exercise. Every other Canadian jurisdiction has some form of free-entry staking, and it is critical for our industry to be competitive. Withdrawals have significant negative effects on exploration, mining, and the economy.

So, two of those large areas that are withdrawn from staking are the Ross River area and the Liard First Nation area. Is Energy, Mines and Resources at the table with those two First Nations, or is that a different department that is leading those discussions about removing those broad staking bans from those two areas?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** What I will do is to, first of all, go back to what I said in the Legislature this past Thursday during Question Period. I will quote myself. I am on page 173 of Hansard — and now I quote: "... I read through that strategy to look at what it said about free-entry staking. It talked about making it consistent with our treaties and case law. It talked about using land use planning and about where and where not to have free entry. It talked about the importance of free entry and that a modified free entry would still be important. Those are the things that are in the mineral development strategy."

So, yes, I did talk about it; I talked about it in reference to the strategy.

Second of all, another question that the member opposite asked is about whether Energy, Mines and Resources is at the table for those conversations with the Kaska. The answer is yes. That work is led by Aboriginal Relations, I believe, but Energy, Mines and Resources is at the table as well.

**Mr. Kent:** I too would like to thank staff in our office for sending in the Hansard from November 18, 2019. It was a question that I had asked about mineral staking.

Just to skip to the end, I said: “Currently, the method for staking claims is often done using a process known as ‘free-entry’ staking. Does the Liberal government support the free-entry system — yes or no?”

The former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources’ one-word answer was “Yes”.

Just so that it is entered into the record again so that perhaps the minister can talk to his colleague about whether or not that response is boxing him into a corner or those types of things, I just wanted to read that into the record from less than two years ago on the floor of this Legislature.

The minister mentioned that Energy, Mines and Resources is at the table. Perhaps Aboriginal Relations is leading these discussions regarding the staking bans. I’m just curious: When was the last meeting of this group to talk about or to continue negotiations to reverse those land withdrawals from staking?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I’ll work to get a date for the member opposite for the most recent meeting.

**Mr. Kent:** I look forward to that. Perhaps when he is getting the date for the last meeting, again recognizing that these are government-to-government discussions, I’m just curious if he could provide us with a list of meetings that have taken place over the past four or five years since his party came to government with respect to discussions around the staking bans.

The other thing that I would like to see if the minister would provide for us is when those staking bans are set to expire. I know that they have been renewed and extended a number of times, but I’m just wondering when the current bans are expected to expire with respect to staking bans in the Ross River and Liard First Nation traditional territories.

I just wanted to move on to talk about the collaborative framework. It’s something that came up during Question Period today. As I mentioned in QP, there was a joint news release with quotes from the Premier, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Yukon Chamber of Mines at the time that said that a collaborative framework would be developed to deal with industry concerns regarding timelines and reassessments. As I mentioned, that commitment was a little over four years ago, and still, nothing has materialized with respect to that.

Again, if this is something that Energy, Mines and Resources is not involved in, we can follow up with the Premier, but I am curious if the minister can give us a status update on the collaborative framework. Is it still being worked on, or has that been abandoned? It was a pretty significant promise to the mineral industry by a relatively new government

at the time, early in their mandate, that has gone, so far, unfulfilled.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** For most of these answers, I will have to ask the department to get some information. Again, the collaborative framework is led by the Executive Council Office and, I believe, Aboriginal Relations, so I will work to try to get that information, including lists of other meetings that have taken place over the last four and a half years — our previous term.

The member asked, as well, about the mineral-staking prohibition. For the Ross River area, it is in place until April 30, 2022.

I will have to get back on the Liard First Nation withdrawals. I do not have it sitting in my notes, so I will have to get that information for the member opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** Madam Chair, the issue of mining in municipalities came up at the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association general meeting and again today in Question Period.

I just wanted to get a status update from the minister on the action plan that was committed to in 2016 shortly after the government was sworn in that this would be done or work would be started and meetings would be underway in 2017. I’m just kind of curious about where we’re at with that process and if the minister can update us on when he anticipates some sort of further engagement or an agreement to be reached with respect to mining in municipalities and existing claims — the other things that I raised in Question Period, as well, around compensation for claims that do end up being expropriated either directly or indirectly by the government.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Apologies to the member opposite, because I missed the very last sentences that he said, so if I miss anything right now — if he could just help me to know what I missed.

For the Kaska traditional territory, both Ross River and the Kaska — on the southern portion of the Kaska, the date is April 30, 2022.

I am keen to get going on the mining and municipalities question. I have asked the department to help to get this agenda moving. We will be working on it. Today — I think it was during Question Period when the member opposite asked about the Association of Yukon Communities and the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association. I said that, yes, I would be happy to meet with them. So, the department and I have indicated that we should work to achieve that soon, so we’ll be working on it right away. I’m sorry I don’t have a timeline today, but I can say that I agree that this is an important policy piece to bring forward.

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

The piece of my question that he missed with was with respect to a compensation plan for claim holders that are either expropriated directly or indirectly based on decisions made with respect to their claims within municipal boundaries. I’m hoping that the minister can include that as part of his conversations with AYC and the KPMA and other stakeholders that he may identify to continue this work.

I do want to cede the floor to the Leader of the Third Party, but I just wanted to touch on a couple of other topics, the first one being forestry.

We have been hearing from a number of the larger fuel-wood suppliers, those in southwest Yukon near Haines Junction and others, that access to fuel wood is getting very difficult for some of the larger commercial suppliers of fuel wood. I'm curious what the minister is contemplating around developing other areas for fuel wood that are close to the larger population centres, and if he can give us a sense of what is happening, particularly in southwest Yukon near Haines Junction, with respect to fuel-wood access for the operators down there. They are quite concerned about getting fuel wood out the door here — running out of supply for their clients.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, on the expropriation, we have a couple of hundred thousand mineral claims in the Yukon, and 85 percent of those are quartz claims. As land use planning and management evolves over time, in some areas, the ability for a company to work a claim may be affected.

No expropriations of placer or quartz mining claims are occurring or planned, including as a result of the implementation of the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* or the Dawson regional land use plan. The Government of Yukon continues to work with claim holders to consider compensation requests on a case-by-case basis. So, it's not a one size fits all.

As I said earlier, I think, during Question Period, if something happens through the mining and municipalities piece, and there are claims to which people effectively don't have the access that they used to have as the result of some change, then we will work with those claims to resolve them.

There are a couple of things that I wanted to say with respect to commercial and personal fuel wood. We want to make sure that people have access to fuel-wood harvesting on public land. I know that there have been some concerns raised.

One of the things that we believe is that, right now, with climate change, we're concerned about fuel-loading around our communities. It's important, not only as a means to help people to have fuel wood but also as a concern about the risk. So, we prioritize planning for small-scale softwood lumber wherever the timber profile suits those types of business opportunities, and fuel-wood harvesting is an essential service for Yukoners to heat their homes and increase energy use.

Let me just acknowledge the member opposite's point. We work closely with First Nations to plan how we manage our forests, and we've collaborated on management plans for the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes, Haines Junction, Dawson, and Teslin regions. I don't have much detailed or specific information for the member opposite on those questions, but let me just acknowledge the concern that he's raising and let him know that the department is live to that situation and working on it. Thank you.

**Mr. Kent:** My final question this afternoon is, again, forestry-related. Just before I cede the floor to the Third Party, I want to once again thank the officials for providing support to the minister here this afternoon and to those who are listening

on the radio and sending additional information to the minister. Thank you to them as well.

So, we talked about fuel wood. Timber access for some of the smaller micro sawmills around the territory is also a concern. Some of those mills are in the Southern Lakes area. Access to a supply of timber is incredibly important to them. With the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes forestry plan, can the minister tell us — I believe we are waiting for one of the First Nation partners to sign off on the plan. Could he let us know if that has been done and if there is any reference, in those documents, to a timber supply analysis or an annual allowable cut for commercial purposes, not related to fuel wood but commercial for milling lumber? I'm sure we've all been to the lumber store lately and recognize the price and cost of lumber. There is a market for this Yukon-based product. I'm curious where, in that document — or if work has already started on a broader timber supply analysis and an annual allowable cut out of that forestry planning area.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, I have just asked the deputy minister to confirm the status of the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes plan. I know what I said when I stood during opening remarks, but I sense that those remarks were prepared some time ago, and I think that plan is now in place, but we will confirm that.

Let me just talk for a moment about Haines Junction. There is a Quill Creek timber harvest plan. The Forest Management branch submitted the Quill Creek timber harvest plan in March 2020 to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board as an executive committee screening. This plan prioritized fuel abatement and economic development opportunities in the Haines Junction area. The plan was expected to be completed — the executive screening process — by the fall of 2020, but again, it has not made it there yet. Again, I think that is COVID-related, but there you go.

The Quill Creek timber harvest plan executive level *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* screening is the first one for forestry in the Yukon. A timber harvest plan is required to maintain a supply of fuel wood for Yukoners. It is in the YESA process, Madam Chair.

With respect to Whitehorse and Southern Lakes, it is an agreement between us, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes plan balances the need to harvest timber within Yukon's most populated region with the values of community wildfire protection in the presence of the important caribou winter habitat.

The next steps are to review the timber harvest plans for consistency with the newly approved forest resource management plan and complete a timber-supply analysis and an annual allowable cut process to determine a sustainable supply of timber for harvesting.

**Ms. White:** Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for Copperbelt South for sharing the time. I would also point out to him that, if he would like to send me any of the e-mails or communications he has with ministers, I would also welcome that, as I reference an e-mail I sent on May 5. So, again, I will put that out there for the Yukon Party that, if they wish to cc

the Yukon NDP in their e-mail communication, I will not say no. That door was open, so I thought I would just walk through it.

The question that I actually sent to the minister in May — which, he is right that he had not responded to 20 days later — is about quota, and that is to do around egg producers. I'm sure that others in this Chamber had extensive conversations with agriculture, and one of the conversations that I had was with Yukon egg farmers. It was actually them who reminded me that I hadn't heard back, so I sent the follow-up e-mail today.

One of the concerns that Yukon egg farmers had highlighted was access to outside marketers and funding — for example, commercial loans. They said that it was problematic, in part, because Yukon isn't a part of Egg Farmers of Canada, and therefore, they are not part of the quota system. To be clear, Madam Chair, I am not an expert in the quota system; I have just been learning the language. Egg Farmers of Canada is kind of a national organization with partner groups in the provinces — not so much in the territories yet. The question I sent to the minister was asking if he had conversations with Yukon egg farmers and their ability to access outside markets.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** What I did right away was ask the department to get a response for the Leader of the Third Party. My apologies that I hadn't sent a note. It was my job to send the member opposite a note, and that was my oversight. I am just acknowledging the letter.

Second of all, in the first few days in the role, what I was told was that the question is a complicated question, because if you move into the quota system, that can affect those who do small production levels, so it just changes the system completely. You have to have a very thoughtful decision to move into the quota system. So, yes, it would open up external markets, but it would also change the system here right now.

Will there be conversation with egg producers about this? Yes. What I understand is that there is no clear decision as of yet, and it may even be that the department has gotten back the information to send across to the Leader of the Third Party, but I have not yet reviewed anything. As soon as I do, I will be sure to share it with her and the Official Opposition.

**Ms. White:** I look forward to that response. I'm sure that egg farmers look forward to conversations with government about the way forward, understanding, of course, that there is a difference in production levels if you have 100 chickens or if you have 300 chickens or if you're selling to, for example, Extra Foods, Save-On Foods, or Superstore than if you're doing gate sales — understanding that farm realities are different.

I'm going to move on to local area planning, specifically around the *Hamlet of Ibex Valley Local Area Plan: Plan Ibex*. When is that plan up for review? I'll start with that question.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Ibex Valley local area plan was approved in 2001. We have a memorandum of understanding drafted, and it will be shared with the First Nations for review and discussion. The Government of Yukon and Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have agreed to begin a comprehensive review of the plan. A memorandum of understanding has been drafted and will be shared with the First

Nations for review and discussion. The memorandum of understanding will set out how the comprehensive review process will proceed.

What I will say is that we don't have dates in place, but what we do have are the initial stages of review underway.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that answer. Since 2001, has that plan been reviewed at all?

I'm just going to repeat that question. Since 2001 when that plan was accepted, has it been reviewed?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** No, not that I know of. The plan has not been reviewed over the past 20 years. I will note, for the House today, that I just received word that the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan has been fully signed off and adopted. I just want to correct my earlier remarks that I gave the first time that I stood to speak here today in Committee of the Whole, because I was incorrect then. That plan is now fully signed off.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that follow-up answer. The reason why I ask about a review — if it has happened or not — is that, in the Ibex Valley local area plan on page 39, it says — and I'm on point 10 and I'm quoting from part of it: "... that a more thorough review and update occur at least every 5 years thereafter."

So, if we're 20 years in and we're getting to our first review, one can understand that there may be some conflicts in the area or some problems, which is going to bring me to my next question.

In 2018, the Hamlet of Ibex Valley LAC sent a letter to the then-minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I'm just going to read from it. It says: "Regarding: Mineral Staking in the Hamlet of Ibex Valley

"On behalf of the residents of the Hamlet of Ibex Valley the Local Advisory Council (LAC) is respectfully requesting an immediate temporary withdrawal of all land from mineral staking that is titled private property, or designated agricultural lands or Protected Open Space (POS) in the Hamlet. We are requesting a prohibition on these lands from all quartz and placer staking until the LAC can consult with local land owners and other interested parties to determine how mineral staking and development should be considered with respect to the Ibex Area Plan.

"We are requesting this withdrawal be effective immediately as it has been brought to our attention that placer claims (pending) have been staked which partially overlap on all 3 types of land (titled, agricultural, POS). This is causing significant stress to a local resident that lives on private titled property that has been partially included in the staking application. It has also caused high concern and anxiety amongst the residents that live here who did not realize or understand that mineral claims can be staked in this manner (i.e. across titled, agricultural or...) — protected open space — "... land)."

The reason why I am quoting from this letter — and I can send it on to the minister, although I believe that it has been, and I have sent it to Hansard, but it is dated April 18, 2017.

The reason that I highlight this is that Yukon government released a "what we heard" document in the spring of 2020,

called “Mineral Staking Development in Yukon Communities”, which highlights the concerns of local planning areas and others. So, the reason why I highlight this is that I am sure the minister has also been in recent communication, which highlights the concerns, because that pending mineral claim is no longer pending in the Ibex Valley — it is now a “go”.

There has been a request, of course, for that community plan to be reviewed, but there is concern about active mining now in that community. So, I wanted to know if the minister has taken any steps to reach out to the local area council with regard to active mining within the Ibex Valley hamlet.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I got a note from the department that there have been minor revisions to the Ibex plan as a result of some work in 2007 and 2010, but the point that the Leader of the Third Party is raising is a very valid point, and it is not unique to Ibex. Let me also say that, throughout the Yukon, this is talking about some of the conflicts that we have in planned areas, including municipalities. I appreciate that Ibex wrote and asked for a staking withdrawal, but we did enter into a process. As I stated, I attended several of those meetings. I don’t think that I was in one in Ibex, but I went to four or five of the meetings about mining in municipalities, which included local areas that have a land use plan.

So, the process that we need to get to here is that process that we were talking about in the Legislature earlier with the Member for Copperbelt South, which is around the mining in municipalities piece.

We have been reached out to by, I think, the same person that the Leader of the Third Party is quoting. She has reached out to me, and I have asked the department to develop a response. That, as I understand, is underway. In order to get at this problem properly, we need to get at the mining in municipalities piece. I don’t want to make out that it is just as easy as snapping fingers, because I know there will be challenges. I understand clearly that there are different opinions on both sides of this question; however, I think the point is that we need to decide, as a territory, which way we are going to go here. I know, when I was a city councillor, when we started asking questions around the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*, we were told that all acts apply — the *Municipal Act*, et cetera. Those are all important here.

I just want to say that I make the same commitment that I made when I stood to respond to questions from the Member for Copperbelt South, which is that this is an important issue, and we will work to put some energy behind it to bring people together and to work together to the finish line.

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

Understanding that the “what we heard” document about mineral staking and development in communities came out in the spring of 2020 and of course we are now in 2021, what are the next steps with that conversation, either territory-wide or internally? Where do we go from the “what we heard” document in 2020?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The general plan is to put forward a draft policy, based on the engagement that happened, and to put it out to the public for engagement. In particular, I note that I agreed today to sit down with the Association of Yukon

Communities and the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association. Hopefully, that can be joint, but I recognize that we have to accommodate the fact that there is a mining season coming up; however, we will work to get that draft policy out and in front of Yukoners so that they have a chance to provide their feedback.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that, and I would note that, understanding that this is a long, ongoing issue, it probably makes sense to try to do that sooner rather than later.

During the Energy, Mines and Resources briefing, I had asked how much money to date had been spent on elk fencing. At the time, I was told that the department didn’t have an answer, and I am hoping that they can have an answer now. So, even not going back for eternal, let’s say, since 2017, can the minister give me an idea of what the Yukon government has spent on elk fencing to date — since 2017?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, what I can say is that, over the past eight years, roughly \$350,000 has been spent on preventive measures, which include fencing and compensation for elk. I have just asked the department if they could get me a breakdown, if possible, on the difference between the compensation and the fencing. I will work to see if we have that.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that. I am actually a bit surprised, knowing that there was \$225,000 included in the supplementary budget for fencing — to know that the number for the last eight years is \$350,000 is a bit of a surprise.

Has the minister seen any of the quotes that the farmers have gotten about installing the elk-proof fencing around their properties? Has the department seen any of those amounts?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I had not seen any of those quotes, but I am informed that the department has seen those quotes, and I am informed that the dollars are substantial, for sure. We have had some conversations — for example, earlier today, I talked about the elk harvest approach to try to reduce the pressure of the problem itself, and I heard both opposition parties today talk about it, one by way of a motion and one by way of a question in Question Period.

The simple answer is yes; the department has seen some of those quotes. As I said earlier, there was a two-year approach, jointly with the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, to try to work on the problem. I am sure it is an ongoing question, especially given the price of construction these days.

**Ms. White:** Madam Chair, I appreciate that the minister has not maybe seen any of those quotes himself, but maybe his officials can give him an idea. Are we talking tens of thousands of dollars, \$50,000, \$100,000, or are we talking in the millions of dollars?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I note that what we need to do is get a price per linear measure somehow. It is not going to say “the fence”, because it depends how big the fence is. I know that these fences are quite tall — I think eight feet tall, is what I recall being told.

I will work to get a price for what the estimates are these days per metre or per length. If I get that information today, I will stand up and share it as I hear it.

**Ms. White:** I appreciate that answer. I guess the concern that was highlighted by the Yukon Agricultural Association was that, for four farms, it was over \$4.5 million for the fencing. The reason why that is a concern is that is a lot of money to invest for the elk problem. The other concern, of course, that I highlighted in Question Period today was around the capital gains question. It is an increase in property value; therefore, it becomes an increase in insurance, and it kind of spirals from there.

The reason I was asking about fencing is because the party leaders — the Liberals, the Yukon Party, and myself as the Yukon NDP leader — have been invited to a farm tour to see the damage done by elk. I am not sure if the Liberals have responded, but I am hopeful. One of the reasons why I believe that this tour is important to whoever goes is to get a common understanding of what the issue is.

The reason why I bring up a common understanding is that we have two departments that work on this issue from two different angles. We have the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources that looks at it from the perspective of agriculture and, of course we have the Department of Environment that looks at it from the issue of elk, but they come at it from very different values with very different opinions about what should happen. One of the questions I have is: Have the department of agriculture and the Department of Environment attended the farm at the same time to hear from the farmers? Have they gone out together for a site visit?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I'm going to go back for a second and just talk about the fencing versus compensation piece. Overall, over the past eight years, we've spent about \$160,000 on compensation and \$190,000 on fencing. What I can say is that, in the split — more recently, we've been working to get the compensation side down and the prevention side up, which is the fencing. I appreciate the member opposite's notion about the price of the fences.

I also will say that the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources work very closely. I don't know specifically whether they attended the tour of sites always together at the same time, but I do know that they work closely. If I can just give that impression, I would be happy to do it.

What I appreciate is that there is a difference in perspectives, for sure. I'll throw another one in there: First Nations have shared a different perspective again. I think that there are a range of perspectives that we need to look at, at all times.

I will say that I unfortunately had booked meetings this coming Friday with chiefs, so I'm not able to make it, but I'm hopeful that someone will make it. I appreciate the questions and the concerns being raised about this issue.

**Ms. White:** I thank the minister for that. The reason I ask about the common understanding — and it's not that I don't believe that the departments work together. We often get told by the government that we have a one-government approach. The experience is often quite siloed and not quite as one-government as one might appreciate. The reason why I ask

the question about that common understanding is because I have also had conversations with chiefs in the area.

I tell you, the elk issue is an interesting one. It's important to note, as well, that it's an introduced species — introduced for hunting opportunities. We've gone from hunting opportunities to now, I guess some could argue, agriculture destroyers in some cases. I understand the destruction that can happen to the fields in a short amount of time, and I appreciate that there have been some solutions brought forward, but based on the fact that party leaders have been invited to a tour on Friday, my guess is that there is concern that two years to see how it falls out is going to be too long, because this has been an ongoing issue. That is why I'm highlighting it. For anyone who attends the tour with me on Friday, I'm sure that we will learn lots of things, and I think it's important.

My next question is around Wolverine securities. It is my understanding that, after this budgetary year, Yukon government will no longer be holding any security money from the Wolverine mine. Can the minister confirm that, please?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just before I leave the question about elk, in all of this conversation, the one part that hasn't been talked about yet is the elk harvest portion. That part of the solution actually has had some success. I don't know how much. I look forward to talking with farmers in the area. I appreciate the point that the situation is fluid and that we need to be responsive. I take that point right away. I also thank the Member for Lake Laberge for his motion earlier today.

With respect to Wolverine mine, the basic answer is yes; the security is now mostly exhausted. There may be some finer detail, but the point that I understand is that, in April this year, PricewaterhouseCoopers initiated a court-approved sale process for the mine site, and we hope that there will be a sale by the late summer, but that is always going to be dependent on the issuance of required authorizations.

What I am trying to say is that there is also value there, not just cost, and so, if there is a sale, the liabilities would go with the sale along with those opportunities.

I can speak further to it, but the basic answer is yes; the money that was held back previously and through the process of dealing with the courts is now expended.

**Ms. White:** I don't want to go too far back, but I am going to touch back on the elk issue, because unfortunately it is not Energy, Mines and Resources that would have an up-to-date number of elk in the territory, but I think that part of the challenge is that it is a double-department overlap between Energy, Mines and Resources and Environment, and if we don't have an accurate count of elk, then it is really hard to tell if harvesting 43 is making the dent that is required. Although, again, I will lay out that going for a site tour by the invitation of farmers with concerns around the elk issue would highlight that 43 is not enough to make a dent in the problem. I am just going to leave that there.

I am going to move back to Wolverine. The reason why I ask about the Wolverine mine is actually because I spent almost a calendar year on-site. I started off when it was care and maintenance and it was in wall tents down by the lake, and then I moved into the new camp that was constructed up on the pad.



I was there for a good portion of that before I left. I have a very clear idea of what Wolverine mine looks like; although, by the time I left, the mill was under construction, and I went on to do other things. But having been on site tours, for example, of the Minto mine and seeing how big the mill is and things like that — one of the reasons that I ask about the Wolverine mine is that it is slated for sale. For folks who aren't familiar, Wolverine was an underground project, which means that it was tunnelled. One of the really interesting things is that shotcrete is a building material — that is the best way that I can describe it — that is used in underground tunnelling, and it is a combination of concrete that actually has metal fibres in it, and so it is used to support the tunnel. If it is required, it is used.

I can tell you, based on my time in the year that I was there and the amount of time I spent with miners as the camp cook, which was significant, and concerns that — so, the tunnel — there was shotcrete used for almost the entire time that there was tunneling — 24 hours a day, shotcrete was used, which was quite unusual — but the tunnel was full of water. I'm not sure how deep it went in by the end, but when I was there, it was already substantially deep. I left in 2009, and they got work for after that. The tunnel is fully submerged in water. That's what has to be treated: the water that's coming out of that tunnel, the water processing plant, and things like that.

What is the expected cost of processing that water per year before it can get turned back into the environment? In a year, what is the expected cost of that water treatment? The Wolverine mine goes for sale this fall. If it sells, then that liability gets transferred, but I want to know what the cost is for the water treatment for the year.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I know, at the risk of labouring on the elk question, but I agree that it's important — I'm not suggesting that the 43 elk taken have put a dent in it, but maybe they will over time, if that is a good solution. In fact, what I heard in the motion today was to extend that area, so maybe that is a solution. I'm not suggesting that it be the only solution; I'm not suggesting that we're closed to other discussions. I think the point is correct that it's an ongoing problem. Maybe part of the solution is the harvest.

The Wolverine mine — I have asked the department if they have a specific number pulled out for what the treatment of the contaminated water from the portal is into the tailings storage facility. I don't have an answer. I am not sure that they have it separated out into that portion of it. I could ask them to estimate something like that, but I do not know that we have a number specifically.

Let me just agree with the member opposite. I have worked underground, and I have seen different mines. It really depends on the nature of the rock and the nature of the situation, just what you use for reinforcing. You are going to base that on the conditions you have at hand. It really depends on the mine. I have not been in Wolverine, and I don't have her experience, so I am not sure exactly about that situation, but if the department can get me a number, they will, but I don't know that they separate it out specifically.

**Ms. White:** The minister just missed his opportunity, so I will leave one question on the record. If it is not about dividing

for water treatment, what is the cost of care and maintenance for a calendar year at Wolverine? He can get back to me with that answer.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. White that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### Chair's report

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*, 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. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, seeing the time, 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 5:27 p.m.*

### Written notice was given of the following motion May 25, 2021:

Motion No. 67

Re: condemning anti-Semitism (Dixon)

### The following written questions were tabled May 25, 2021:

Written Question No. 1

Re: court cases involving the Government of Yukon (Cathers)

Written Question No. 2

Re: legislative drafting (Cathers)

Written Question No. 3

Re: development schedule for Whistle Bend (Clarke, Y.)

Written Question No. 4

Re: Whistle Bend school (Clarke, Y.)

Written Question No. 5

Re: housing projects (Clarke, Y.)

Written Question No. 6

Re: Whistle Bend Place (Clarke, Y.)

Written Question No. 7

Re: pedestrian-activated crosswalks in Watson Lake  
(McLeod)