

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Hon. Jolie Kaerner

(Amittuq)

Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Hon. Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs

Mary Killiktee

(Uqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial Management Board; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Alexander Sammurtok

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for Seniors

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Joe Savikataaq

(Arviat South)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Craig Simailak

(Baker Lake)

Hon. David Joanasie

(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Hon. Joelle Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Hon. Daniel Qavvik, Ms. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Good day. Before we begin, Mr. Anavilok, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good day, my colleagues, and Inuit who are watching the televised proceedings and listening to the radio broadcast, welcome.

Before we begin, (interpretation ends) just one little message for people fighting cancer: stay strong, try to stay healthy, and live life to the fullest. We all don't like every inch of cancer and hope someday they will find a way to get rid of it. Thank you.

Ministers' Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 321 – 6(2): GN Responds to NWT Wildfires

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your inspirational words to start off this afternoon. Good afternoon, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge our whole-of-government response to the Northwest Territories' catastrophic wildfires.

We remained in frequent communication with the Government of the Northwest Territories leading up to, during, and after the wide-scale evacuations. I personally spoke with Premier Cochrane on numerous occasions. I also remained in communication with my legislative colleagues in the Kitikmeot region. Our goal was to offer our support, while ensuring the safety of Nunavummiut in our care.

Mr. Speaker, as a pre-emptive measure, the departments of Health and Community and Government Services worked with Canadian North. We procured a charter plane to

transfer all medical travellers and escorts from Yellowknife to Edmonton. All 85 medical travellers and escorts were accounted for and arrived safely in Edmonton. Patients in need of urgent care were prioritized.

Mr. Speaker, we helped ensure those on duty travel were accounted for, as well as clients under the responsibility of Family Services as well as Justice.

Our government's interdepartmental committee assessed ongoing repercussions and impacts as issues arose related to transportation and the supply chain to the Kitikmeot region.

Mr. Speaker, we donated \$250,000 to the United Way Northwest Territories Emergency Response Fund to support residents impacted by wildfire. These funds went towards the work of organizations that were directly welcoming and helping the thousands of evacuees.

Mr. Speaker, we felt deeply the tragedy of the wildfires experienced by our neighbours to the west, including relatives and loved ones. We continue to think of them as they resume, and for some who are rebuilding, their lives after the wildfires. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 322 – 6(2): Toxoplasmosis Screening Program

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House that in July 2023, the Department of Health initiated a territory-wide Toxoplasmosis Screening Program for pregnant women. The program is aimed at early detection and prevention of congenital toxoplasmosis.

Toxoplasma, a parasite found globally and in some Nunavut country foods, poses a particular risk to pregnant individuals. While most people experience mild symptoms, infection during pregnancy can lead to serious disabilities in unborn babies and in some cases, miscarriage or stillbirth.

It's crucial to note that country food remains a healthy and nutritious option, especially during pregnancy. However, we recommend pregnant women ensure all meat and seafood is eaten cooked to kill any potential toxoplasma parasites.

Before the implementation of this territory-wide Toxoplasmosis Screening Program, we were working with limited surveillance and reactive health care. A blood test will now be a routine part of prenatal care to allow early detection and avoid potential harm to both

mothers and their unborn children. This program will also allow Health to monitor and gauge the true extent of toxoplasmosis in the territory over time, helping us to allocate resources more effectively.

Uqaqtitsijii, this program is not just about screening; it's about harm reduction. By identifying at-risk pregnancies early, we can initiate timely treatments to prevent the toxoplasma parasite from affecting unborn babies. We are taking a proactive approach that will save lives and reduce the long-term health care burden on Nunavut families. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Minister's Statement 323 – 6(2): Making Research Work for Nunavummiut

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to provide an update on important research Nunavut Arctic College is carrying out with McMaster University. It is a five-year project called "Making Research Work for Nunavummiut." This project started in 2021 and will conclude in 2026. It is funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant.

As Members of this House are aware, Nunavut Arctic College is the designated authority for the territory's *Scientists Act*. This means the college is responsible for issuing research licences related to health, social and natural sciences in the territory. The Nunavut Research Institute, which is a division of the college, is the key administrator of these duties. It receives and reviews applications and coordinates communication with community organizations who also review these applications.

Mr. Speaker, the licences issued by the Nunavut Research Institute include terms and conditions to ensure research activities do not harm Nunavummiut or the environment. Licence holders must also submit a report at the end of each year describing the research that they carried out. The Nunavut Research Institute maintains a database of information on all projects licensed under the *Scientists Act*, and the college and McMaster University are drawing on this valuable data to better understand how science is evolving in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, two years into this project, I am proud to confirm that a research trends report has been completed for each Nunavut community. This report explains where research is happening in and near the communities, what topics are being studied, who is conducting the research, how Nunavummiut are involved, and how the results of the research are being communicated and shared. This report also explains the research

licensing requirements in Nunavut, including researchers' responsibilities and community members' rights in research. While this report is hosted on the Nunavut Research Institute website, at the appropriate time, I will be tabling this report in the House.

Mr. Speaker, by sharing more information with Nunavummiut, we remain committed to upholding Inuit self-determination, knowledge, and governance in research not only within the college but across Nunavut. I am proud of the work the college is doing to achieve these very important goals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 324 – 6(2): Community Wellness Hub Engagement

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, while there is a rich diversity of programming across Nunavut, community-based organizations report challenges in being able to consistently deliver programs because of a lack of available space.

Mr. Speaker, Family Services, in partnership with Community and Government Services, Health, and Nunavut Tunngavik, visited Arctic Bay, Baker Lake, Kinngait, and Kugluktuk to engage communities on designs for community wellness hubs.

(interpretation) Community members envisioned welcoming drop-in spaces where they gather, connect, and support each other. Community members requested private counselling spaces, safe spaces for youth, opportunities for elders to gather, community kitchens, and spaces to support cultural and on-the-land programs. A functional program review is now complete.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Family Services will now work with its partners to advance this project to the next stage of capital planning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 325 – 6(2): 2023 Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship Recipients

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Department of Economic Development and Transportation is committed to building Nunavut's transportation workforce by promoting careers in our aviation industries. The

Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship supports this objective by providing grants to Nunavut students actively enrolled in an aviation-based program area of study.

Mr. Speaker, air transportation is critical for the health and well-being of our communities, and that system relies on skilled labour. Across the country, there are labour shortages in those skilled positions, and there are so many opportunities for Nunavummiut who want to enter the aviation industry.

This year I am very pleased to report that four impressive young Nunavummiut, all in school and working toward successfully achieving their aviation-based programs, have been chosen by the selection committee. The successful scholarship recipients are as follows:

- Nqobile Mazorodze (Commercial Pilot Training)
- Derek Fredlund (Aircraft Maintenance Engineering)
- Jukipa Kotierk (Commercial Pilot Training)
- Ronald Oolooyuk (Mechanical Engineering)

Each of these talented individuals will receive a scholarship valued at \$7,500 to help towards the cost of their aviation-based studies.

Please join me in recognizing this year's recipients of the Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Mr. Kaernek.

Minister's Statement 326 – 6(2): Kenn Harper Donation to the Government of Nunavut

Hon. Joelle Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, members and good day, Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share about the donation made to the Government of Nunavut archives by author Kenn Harper. This donation includes selected historical files documenting the arrival of court officials and the RCMP to the Belcher Islands case of 1941 in what is now known as Sanikiluaq.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this donation consists of 35 centimetres of textual material that includes first-hand knowledge and, while this information is of a sensitive nature, it will be invaluable for historical research. This donation complements the Archives Program's government records branch and our private sector repository, which is now accessible to the public by appointment with the Territorial Archivist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 436 – 6(2): Toxoplasmosis Screening Program

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Department of Health. The minister just made a minister's statement about the Toxoplasmosis Screening Program, and I am very pleased that we have such a program made available for pregnant women. This is an issue that we fought very hard for in Pond Inlet. There will now be a screening process made available via bloodwork. I just wanted to thank the Department of Health for providing such a program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 437 – 6(2): Condolences to the Family of Looty Pijamini

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the people of the High Arctic, we suffered a huge loss. Just this past week, we lost two women who lived in Ottawa.

Last night we heard that a long-time Grise Fiord resident who now resides in Iqaluit, Looty Pijamini, has passed on. He's a famous carver, very well known around the world, and we have his carvings on display here in the House and in the Assembly precinct. Our condolences to the family, his wife, Peepeelee, who was there as an escort for a long time and stayed by Looty's side. Also, his daughter and granddaughter had made it down. There were also Zoom meetings with his sisters.

I would like to express my appreciation to the people who took care of Peepeelee when she was down in Ottawa and this morning, she called and I also called her sisters. They have accepted the fact that Looty Pijamini has passed on, but he was a very famous carver and world renowned. When Peepeelee is coming, we will make sure that we meet her. She is currently in Ottawa and you can go see her at the boarding home.

I think of the High Arctic residents in prayer and we also have hope, even though such cases come along. We send our condolences and thank you for giving me an opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Condolences to the family and the community.

Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Kusugak.

Member's Statement 438 – 6(2): Happy Birthday to Granddaughter

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years, I think I missed so many birthdays and celebrations of my family, and today is another one.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity to wish my granddaughter, Paris Graham a very happy birthday. Paris was only four years old when she made this poppy for me so for her today, I wear this special poppy she made me. I just want to wish my *irngutaq*, *Piipinnaash*, a happy birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

>>Applause.

Speaker: Members' Statement. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Member's Statement 439 – 6(2): Happy Birthday to Grandmother

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day to all those listening to our proceedings. I hope all of the territory trick-or-treaters had a great Halloween last night. I know Iqalummiut will be enjoying the trick-or-treating this evening, and please stay safe everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I have a special birthday greeting to share for today as well. I would like to wish my grandmother through my grandfather's sister, Pihoak, a very happy 84th birthday. Her daughter is here with us today working in the interpreter booth, Eva Ayalik.

I know that we all send our love to her and she's probably busy working as she was my former co-worker at the Kitikmeot Heritage Society as an elder and resident. At her age, she is still sharing her knowledge to the community and to beyond with the projects that she works on.

Mr. Speaker, this summer's heat broke many records and caused significant challenges across our territory. One of those events was the wildfire that impacted constituents that were in Bathurst Inlet. As many of you know, we have several community members from Cambridge Bay who are originally from Bathurst Inlet, and they return every summer and as often as possible to harvest country food to enjoy and the natural of the area.

Mr. Speaker, this wildfire came very close to the campers. Fortunately, nobody was harmed. For that I want to acknowledge and thank the emergency response efforts from the Department of Community and Government Services and B2Gold for their support on the ground and in the air to put this fire out safely.

Mr. Speaker, although our community and region were impacted a few weeks later by the fires that ravaged the Northwest Territories, I am thankful for the community's cooperation. We continue to learn how these unforeseen weather-related events disrupts so many critical services to our communities including medical travel.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker: Member's seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are none, please continue.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Department of Health and the medical travel teams for working hard to make the best to adapt to this situation by finding alternative locations for patients and their escorts to travel in safely. I'd also like to thank Canadian North for their efforts as well to ensuring that our constituents returned home safely.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will not have to undergo any more of these unpredictable fires again but recognize that the only way that we can get through these events is to work together.

To that, I want to thank all those at all levels of government, the private sector, and community members who took quick action to support our community and region during this hardship. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Member, you snuck in two comments, or three comments in there. You have to stick to one statement.

Members' Statements. Member for Arviat, North, Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 440 – 6(2): Safe Halloween in Constituency

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge the children who went Halloween trick-or-treating in Whale Cove, Gjoa Haven and Arviat. I would also like to thank the people who took their children out and also to the people who handout candies to the Halloween trick-or-treaters in Whale Cove and Gjoa Haven.

We have to watch the polar bears out there during trick-or-treating in Arviat, so there is always a monitor for polar bears so I also would like to thank the polar bear guards. They work tirelessly during Halloween; not just on Halloween, they work tirelessly during the fall.

The two Arviat residents who have been working for quite some time being polar bear guides, Leo Ikakhik, first of all. He has been working as a polar bear guard for quite some time, so I would like to thank him and Mr. Ludovik Issumatarjuak who are polar bear guides.

There are more guides out there and I also would like to thank the Department of Environment and also the environmental technologists. They have worked very closely to work on this issue.

It is evident at Halloween, that we notice that they need polar bear guards, especially in the fall. They have to be careful to do their work as polar bear guides. They work very tirelessly. I would like to thank them and I rise today to acknowledge them.

Also ask my colleagues to appreciate them as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Member's Statement 441 – 6(2): Inuinnaqtun Language

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish a good day to the residents of Kugluktuk.

I want to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of Kugluktuk Inuit, as our dialect of Inuinnaqtun is disappearing, as some people who I ask state that to the older folks, that Inuinnaqtun is being written in the wrong way.

Later on, at the appropriate time I will have questions for the minister who is responsible for languages on this issue of our dialect, and how we can incorporate more support for the Inuit of Kugluktuk in order to revitalize our dialect as it is slowly disappearing.

I just wanted to make that statement about this needed initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 590 – 6(2): Office Closure Policy

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to supplement an answer I provided to Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet. In 2023 there have been two weather closures in Rankin Inlet and three weather closures in Chesterfield Inlet. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Return to Oral Question 596 – 6(2): Staff Housing for Non-Inuit Employees

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for acknowledging me again. (interpretation ends) I rise today to supplement and answer I provided to Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Member for Arviat South. Fourteen non-Inuit were given staff housing between October 2022 and May 2023.

The same period when 72 units were allocated to Inuit, Nunavut Housing Corporation allowed Nunavut Construction Corporation to utilize the Government of Nunavut staff housing units in Arviat for approximately four weeks during the Assembly of the two modular units.

Vacant Government of Nunavut staff housing units are sometimes used for short-term occupancies for non-government staff, but this does not result in delays in allocating staff housing units. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions.

Members, before we start, today should be a low preamble day, unlike yesterday. We have a lot of members that do want to ask questions, and some members that do want to answer some questions.

Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Item 6: Oral Questions**Question 626 – 6(2): Elders Strategy Update**

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my question to the Premier, the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues will be aware, I very much support the role of elders in Nunavut's society. It is up to us to ensure that elders are safe, comfortable and well cared for as they age.

In February of 2023, the Premier announced that consultations would be undertaken in regions across Nunavut and in Ottawa.

Can the Premier provide an update on the progress towards developing the strategic action plan for elders in Nunavut, and what challenges have been encountered to this date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my colleague for her excellent question.

Its true the elders are very priceless to us and I'm very pleased about this question since we consider our elders to be an important asset. I was very pleased during our retreat in Cambridge Bay where we explored ways as a government to place more emphasis on our beloved elders.

I believe it was in February where I made a statement about wishing to meet with elders' representatives later on, and I am gratified to state that during the spring and summer sittings, we were able to hold several regional meetings with elder representatives from every community and had them complete a survey inquiring about the most important issues to them at both the community and regional levels.

There were meetings held in the regional centres, such as Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Pond Inlet as well as in Cambridge Bay. In these regional meetings, however, we invited two local elders from every community to attend, and we had successful meetings up to now. They surveyed them and listened to their concerns.

We were also able to host an elders meeting in Ottawa as well, where they gathered the information provided in the answers to our questions, and after they compiled this information, the staff were able to send back the reports to the elders who attended these meetings to verify the concerns and issues.

Yesterday I just received that report from the elders from the surveys. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank you Premier for your response. It is very clear, that logistical issues tend to become challenging when trying to plan out the logistics for regional meetings.

Although he didn't talk about the challenges, but (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the governments mandate identifies elders and aging with dignity as a key priority area. The mandate was established as one of the first actions in this government and this priority is the first one on the list.

Can the minister provide a brief overview of what will be included in the elders strategy and what will be the key components of the strategy's framework? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank my colleague again. The goal of the Conference of Elder Care Strategy was really threefold.

The first was to articulate the systemic approaches to a conference of elder care strategy that really outlines within the systemic issues that elders face right now.

The second one was to guide the decision-making related to the elder and senior programming and services that we see from a whole-of-government approach.

The third was to chart a path forward that insures that the care that we provide our elders reflects the values that they so deserve.

So those were the founding reasons behind the conference of strategy. As I just noted, we were very pleased that we concluded what we heard. Regional gatherings we were able to provide.

As the member asked, there were no barriers that we saw. The importance that we heard from the elders and us getting back to make sure what we heard was accurate was one that required a bit more time.

However, that is so important, but I am very pleased to be able to mention to the member that just yesterday, I did receive what her heard before and we will be moving on to the next phase of really the strategy that's going to be forthcoming. I look forward to seeing the final report come early December. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the clear explanation, but only part of my question was answered. I would like to ask it again.

Its been almost two years now since the development of the elders strategy. Since it was first announced on February 24, 2023, the Premier stated that he aimed to have the new framework completed by December.

Can the minster confirm that the strategy will be completed on time and if so, will he commit to tabling it at our next sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I completely agree with my colleague. I really want to bring out the plan that when it is completed, we are going to use it to see how we can further help elders.

We have this big responsibility, so I have good expectations that all things that were said by the elders will be considered very important and we will be able to base a lot of our work on those.

I expect that at our next meeting with the elders, or at our next sitting, we will be able to bring it out, or table it after Cabinet has reviewed it. I will be presenting it here and I want to make sure we work together on planning for the elders, and I have kept myself open to that. I really want the regular members to be a part of this process. I encourage them to do so on behalf of our elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 627 – 6(2): Liquor Regulation

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Netsilik, I am very proud to represent two communities in this House, Kugaaruk and Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, the residents of the two communities that I represent have chose to follow different paths in respect to the issue of liquor regulations. One community is unrestricted, and the other community is prohibited. Other Kitikmeot communities have made their own choices. Mr. Speaker, I respect the choices made by my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's current departmental business plan indicates that one of its current priorities is to undertake community consultations on possible changes to the *Liquor Act*.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if his department is considering removing the ability of each Nunavut community to determine whether or not liquor is to be unrestricted, restricted, or prohibited? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's important for the community to decide how they want the alcohol controlled in their community, and we will not be arbitrarily taking that responsibility away. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, the Legislative Assembly recently passed a new *Liquor Tax Act*. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm when the provisions of this legislation will come into force? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is currently taking a very close look on the key parameters around the *Tax Act* and once we have those, I will be in a much better position to be able to give details around the *Liquor Tax Act*, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, concerns have been expressed in the Qikiqtaaluk region about the impact that the Iqaluit Beer and Wine Store has had on neighbouring communities and concerns have been expressed in the Kivalliq region about the impact that the Rankin Inlet Beer and Wine Store has had on neighbouring communities.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Tunngavik recently held its annual general meeting in Cambridge Bay, which is the regional centre of the Kitikmeot. Mr. Speaker, one of Nunavut Tunngavik's formal announcements was a call for the government to "delay the opening of additional beer and wine stores in Nunavut."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm if his department is still proceeding with its plan to open a new beer and wine store in Cambridge Bay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that NTI, Tunngavik, just finished their meetings and I haven't yet seen any of their motions or resolutions, but speaking directly in terms of the Kitikmeot beer and wine store, it is a long and slow process and I have not heard anything that would stop that process from going, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr.

Question 628 – 6(2): Nunavut 3000 Strategy

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Good day, people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

During yesterday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the minister made a statement concerning the Nunavut 3000 strategy.

In his statement, the minister spoke about the partnership agreement between the Nunavut Housing Corporation and NCC Development.

As the minister is aware, the Nunavut 3000 strategy document indicates that the “preliminary target for the 2023 build program” for Rankin Inlet is 20 new “public housing units” and 20 new “affordable housing units.”

Can the minister clearly explain the procurement process for the 20 new “affordable housing units”? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those units that my colleague is referring to are gained from the private and public sector. If there is interest in the community or territory towards building affordable housing units, the housing corporation would work with them in filling out necessary paperwork to ensure that they qualify and get reimbursement for the affordable housing sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In his statement of yesterday, the minister indicated that NCC Development’s “focus on training will help to increase local employment.”

Can the minister confirm approximately how many residents of Rankin Inlet have been hired to date to work on the community’s new public and affordable housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That process has just started. I believe that they just finished the pile work and the construction of the actual units is very early in its stage. I do not have the detail of exactly how many are working as of right now, but as it progresses and moves forward, I am sure we will be getting those numbers. At those times, if my colleague wants, I can provide those particular detailed numbers, but it is very hard to give them as they are just starting to go through the construction phase. May I add, Mr. Speaker, I hope to see the numbers increase as the building starts to go through. I’m sure it’s going to fluctuate throughout the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Kugluktuk recently asked questions to the minister concerning the community allocations for the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s 2024 build program.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Nunavummiut are aware of the plans now that the Legislative Assembly has approved the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2024-25 capital estimates.

When will the Nunavut 3000 housing strategy document be updated to include information on the 2024 build program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 2024 build program, as outlined in the Nunavut 3000 document, the document we are going through, Mr. Speaker, and I don't believe that there are any changes to it. It is the plan that we are following and that plan is available from the housing corporation. Should we change the plan and make additions or deletions, at that time, I will be more than happy to flag those and make sure that the public is aware of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 629 – 6(2): Wildlife Disease Monitoring

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my constituents and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for the statement that he made earlier this week concerning wildlife disease monitoring in respect to barren-ground caribou. I encourage the minister to provide regular updates to Kivalliq and Kitikmeot MLAs on this situation.

Mr. Speaker, concerns have recently been brought to my attention regarding the health of seal populations in Foxe Basin. Hunters in Naujaat and Igloolik have reported harvesting seals that have exhibited rashes, discoloration, and potential signs of disease. Can the minister confirm that his department is aware of these concerns? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question and bringing the concerns from his constituency. Mr. Speaker, the level of detail is not in front of me. I will commit to getting back to the member with information in regard to his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be expecting that as I will be interested to hear if the government is aware of what is happening with our wildlife, whether they are in danger or pose dangers to people.

(interpretation ends) In the minister's statement that he recently made concerning barren-ground caribou, he indicated that his department works with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative to examine samples from animals that are suspected of being diseased, and community members collect samples from seals during spring and summer. They collect samples that the HTO does.

Can the minister confirm that tissue samples from marine animals such as seals are examined by this entity? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Marine mammals are federally legislated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and they are not mandated by the Department of Environment. For the member's question, the samples for the caribou were sent. We do work with the group. However, seal harvesting and management falls under Economic Development and Transportation, but it's federally legislated under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that marine mammals are managed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, but (interpretation ends) the Department of Environment should support it because it benefits our constituencies.

It is important for the department to work closely with hunters and trappers organizations across Nunavut to monitor the animals that we harvest for signs of disease. Can the minister describe what training is offered to Nunavut hunters and Trappers organizations in this area? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our conservation officers do have the ability to take samples and submit the samples to the regulated, legislated within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

We do have close working relationships with our hunters and trappers organizations across the territory and we share information amongst stakeholders in our communities. Yes, we do have conservation officers that can collect samples on behalf of hunters that can be sent to the southern laboratories that we send [samples] to southern Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 630 – 6(2): Clare’s Law for Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, over three years ago, I asked a previous Minister of Justice about introducing a Clare’s Law in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would allow the RCMP to proactively work to prevent intimate partner violence by disclosing an individual’s violent past to individuals who are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, on the first day of this sitting, I tabled correspondence from the Minister of Justice to the Iqaluit City Council, which voted unanimously to adopt a motion calling on the Legislative Assembly to examine and implement a Clare’s Law in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that there is support for introducing a Clare’s Law in Nunavut. I would like to ask: can the minister clearly indicate when he will be introducing such a bill in this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud the member for continuing to raise this. It is a very important issue that needs attention. As we stated earlier, when we were doing the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* community consultations, it was also taken into account. Once we received that, we looked at Clare’s Law and determined, as part of our consultations, that we will need to carve that out and have its own legislation and we’re looking into that.

I know that two jurisdictions are already implementing and two others have already passed laws but they haven’t implemented yet. It has been a turnaround and I applaud the member for raising this because a lot of this had to do with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s ability to do it. Through good conversations like this, we’re able to start changing this within the Canadian jurisdictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could not be happier and express my gratitude for the minister’s comments. That is very exciting to hear and I applaud the minister’s decision to carve that out and implement its own unique bill.

Mr. Speaker, when I first raised this issue three and a half years ago, I asked the government to take this Clare’s Law a step further to incorporate aspects to disclose potential victims of child sexual abuse.

Mr. Speaker, of the hundreds of Nunavummiut who are on the registered sex offenders list, over half of those have convictions for offences against children.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, in the Department of Family Services' annual report, we now know that over 500 children have come forward in one year to report instances of child sexual abuse.

Now more than ever, I strongly further support the idea to incorporate aspects of Clare's Law to also address and allow our RCMP to have a proactive and preventative measure to protect children from child sexual abuse.

For my next question, I would like to ask the minister if he has taken my comments into account and will he be incorporating aspects of child sexual abuse into the upcoming Clare's Law. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For children and the protection of the children, there is strong legislation and very high on the privacy side. For some of the work that we have already gone under in terms of what Clare's Law would look like, the discussion about sex offenders or children are also part of our review, but it's from an immediate step, we need to look at the federal legislation that protects the children.

There is some certain legislation that trumps our territorial legislation. That one is part of the areas that we're looking into, but from my perspective, it has already been flagged as that there are federal legislations that may trump, as children's rights are very protected through our territorial Acts and through the federal legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 631 – 6(2): Kivalliq Intercommunity Road Initiative

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Baker Lake, colleagues, and all the staff.

Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I asked him a number of questions during our spring sitting concerning the Kivalliq Intercommunity Road initiative, which is truly a transformative project that demands our full support as a government.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, the consulting firm that is currently undertaking work on this project has recently released a public survey on this project.

I am confident that the minister will be pleased to hear that I completed the survey as a proud resident of Baker Lake, and I encourage all eligible Kivalliq residents to take a few minutes to provide their feedback.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to ensuring that the findings from the survey are tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for filling out that survey; it is critical that we get that information. Any of the information that we're collecting will produce a report and will determine then at what levels of what will be needed to be tabled, but I am committed that this report will be made public and there is still work that is ongoing, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the minister committed to making it public one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, information published by his department indicates that the next stage in the public consultation process will be community meetings in January of next year. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm the dates, times, and location for the Baker Lake consultation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information that I have is that the consultations will take place in January and February. It does not include the breakdowns of when those communities will be visited, but once I get that information, I will be very happy to share that with all of the Kivalliq MLAs that are impacted on this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank again the member for the continued commitment on this project to get back to me and other Kivalliq Members of the Legislative Assembly that will be affected.

Mr. Speaker, information published by his department indicates that the Kivalliq Intercommunity Road initiative is currently taking into account the proposed new Nunavut Land Use Plan. It is my understanding that the proposed new Nunavut Land Use Plan will impact such issues as the route options for the intercommunity road. It sounds to me a lot like it could even have major effects to the idea of actually trying to build this road, which is concerning for me.

As the minister is aware, the Nunavut Planning Commission submitted the 2023 *Recommended Nunavut Land Use Plan* to the federal Minister of Northern Affairs, the territorial Minister of Environment, and the president of Nunavut Tunngavik back in June of this year.

Can the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation clarify how his department is participating in the tripartite review of the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The land use plan touches on major developments, such as this road, all the roads that are being planned, or the fibre link. I want to assure the member that when our government is reviewing the draft land use plan, all of those will be taken into consideration.

I work closely with my colleague who is taking the lead on this for the tripartite discussions that are taking place. Within our government, all of the government departments that are impacted do have processes in place to provide input into this draft and provide recommendations to the minister that is going to be the signatory to the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Question 632 – 6(2): Marine Tourism

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I also have questions for the (interpretation ends) Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and this concerns the issue of marine tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to share information concerning Pond Inlet's community priorities with the Office of the Premier to use in his meeting with our Member of Parliament and her federal leader.

As the minister is aware, Pond Inlet is known as the "Jewel of the Arctic." There is tremendous opportunity to develop a sustainable tourism sector for my community.

As the minister is aware, his department published a *Nunavut Marine Tourism Management Plan* that expired in the year 2019, shortly before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [department's] current business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to review and renew this plan. Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation got a number of strategies of all of our work. With the *Katujiluta* mandate asking us to have sector-specific, all of that work is ongoing. This particular one is being drafted and being towards the work. I don't know how far that work is, but I have given directions on each of those strategies to get those developed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. Mr. Speaker, it is important that the marine tourism industry and the cruise ships which enter our waters operate in a respectful way that does not damage our environment or disturb our wildlife. I would like to thank the minister for visiting Pond Inlet in spring and meeting with the local organizations.

As the minister is aware, the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Association and the Municipality of Pond Inlet have urged the government to ensure that cruise ships adhere to the community's preferred sailing routes.

As the minister is also aware, his department's business plan indicates that one of its current priorities is to "develop an online information portal for the multiagency cruise ship permitting process."

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work and can he confirm that his department has clearly conveyed Pond Inlet's concerns to the cruise ship companies that enter Nunavut waters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to applaud the member of the legislative, my colleague here, for raising it and inviting me to her fine community and being able to talk to the hunters and trappers and also to the municipalities. We relayed those concerns directly to the association of the cruise ships that we have a very good working relationship with and for this summer, a majority of them adhered to it.

We have an annual meeting with the association and we bring those issues forward and I know that in some communities other than Pond Inlet, there were concerns being raised, alarm bells where hunters did not want their areas being (interpretation) used. (interpretation ends) We make those recommendations and I encourage anyone, if there are any concerns, they be brought to my department's attention because we do have a very good working relationship with our cruise ship association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for sharing our concerns. As the minister is also aware, *Marine Tourism Regulations* made under the authority of the territorial *Tourism Act* were introduced in the year 2018.

The regulations contain an important Code of Conduct for cruise ship operators and passengers entering our waters and visiting our communities.

Can the minister indicate if any violations of the regulations were reported and/or investigated during the 2023 cruise ship season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I have not seen anyone approach our department on this, but that regulation is in place and for those cruise ship associations, they have been adhering to that regulation and I applaud them for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 633 – 6(2): Caribou Sport Hunting

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say “good day” to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the Minister of Environment.

There has been a lot of talk of caribou here lately and the past Assembly. I would like to ask the minister about the sports hunting of caribou, non-resident sports hunting.

Mr. Speaker, in the Kivalliq we have a number of big game outfitters and I’m going to specifically concentrate on the Qamanirjuaq herd. The big game outfitters need certainty and they have to plan their business as the number of tags available.

My first question is: what’s the number of non-resident caribou tags available to the outfitters, if there is a limit, from the Qamanirjuaq herd? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my understanding, there are no limits to the sports hunting allocations for non-residents within the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The outfitters will be happy to hear that there are no limits for the number of caribou tags available from the Department of

Environment, so they can book as many hunters as will want to come to Nunavut, non-resident sports hunters from out of Nunavut. The outfitters will be happy to hear that.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard of other caribou herds that are on the decline within Nunavut and there are no more sports hunting tags available for those herds. For the Qamanirjuaq herd, what would trigger a restriction for the number of caribou tags that would be available for big game outfitters, if there are any triggering mechanisms that are for the number of tags available, or would the number of tags available to big game outfitters be unlimited until there is a total allowable harvest? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To add on to the first question, there are no total allowable harvests for the sports hunting opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the trigger mechanism would be in terms of the population size in terms of declining. If the department finds that a caribou herd is in a declining state, the Department of Environment does do surveys across the caribou herds in our territory and once we know the populations are in a declining state, we have a working relationship with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board that we work together to make recommendations for caribou harvesting in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm aware that currently there are no total allowable harvests, period, for the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd. There is none. I asked earlier if there were any limits for non-resident big game outfitters and the minister has clearly stated that there are no limits for the number of caribou tags available for big game outfitters from the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd.

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that if the caribou population is in decline and it is sad, but most caribou populations within Nunavut are on the decline, the Qamanirjuaq herd, I believe the population estimates used to be in the neighbourhood of 450,000 to 500,000 and I also believe that the last survey for the Qamanirjuaq herd was between 250,000 and 300,000, so it is in decline. I don't know if that's a concerned decline, but the minister stated that it would have to be in the decline for talks to start with the co-management partners to see about the total allowable harvest, and I hope that we never have to see a total allowable harvest from the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd, but it is in decline.

Can the minister clarify the definition of "decline" for caribou harvests? This is roughly at, rough math, maybe 35 percent decline, but what would trigger a total allowable harvest for the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd? Where is the decline, the red line? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud the member for raising that caribou are a great value to our territory.

Mr. Speaker, the Qamanirjuaq herd was last surveyed in June 2022, which estimated the population to be 252,892, precisely, adult caribou, down from 288,244 in 2017. This survey that was found, it's an overarching statistically significant decline trend but, Mr. Speaker, Environment confirmed the high likelihood of continued decline. Although the Qamanirjuaq caribou herds are in that stage, no management recommendation has been put forward during this time.

For that level of detail in regard to the member's question on where is the red line to make a management [decision], I will commit to getting back to the member for that detail to his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 634 – 6(2): Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice, and they concern the issue of his department's Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian.

Mr. Speaker, I understand and recognize that the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee administers trusts and estates on behalf of Nunavummiut who pass away without a will. This is a very serious responsibility and also a concern of other Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this office also supports people with disabilities and assists with personal affairs in collaboration with clients and their families.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, I think it was in the spring or winter, a number of job positions were advertised in this office.

Can the minister indicate how many positions in this office are currently filled and how many are vacant? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the department has many issues to deal with and I know they are working very hard. I know that they were lacking capacity, but their capacity seems better now.

In regards to how many employees they have, and how many vacancies remain, I do not have that information in front of me, but I would be able to provide it to the member.

As an example, we do not really administer it as it is a body that is arm's length from the government, and as the minister, there are several agencies outside of government, such as the (interpretation ends) public trustees (interpretation) and due to this fact, I cannot provide an immediate answer so I will take it as notice, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Member, be aware that you have other members that do want to ask questions; if you can shorten your preamble. Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not the first time I have been asked to keep my preamble shorter, and I will agree to that request. I will switch to English then.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the last time that I raised this issue was during the Legislative Assembly's sitting of June 8, 2022. At that time, I raised concerns regarding the need to raise awareness in the smaller communities about the role of this office.

Can the minister indicate how many open files are currently being dealt with by this office? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of September 2023, the total number of files that the Public Trustee does have right now is 559. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It behooves me to not speak in Inuktitut as it seems hard to be understood in speaking it in the House. I will try to move ahead, regardless, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, a number of constituents have expressed their concerns to me about the length of time it takes for their files to make progress. Although I recognize that these matters can be complicated and do take time, I have heard of some cases that have taken over five years to resolve. This is not acceptable.

Can the minister indicate what additional financial and human resources are required by the Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian in order to shorten the length of time it takes to resolve files? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of whether we hire more employees, some residents who lose loved ones find it difficult to determine who would inherit the belongings of the deceased, and furthermore, there are

different ideas espoused by the family members, and it can involve a long process in determining whom will receive the benefits.

Additionally, family members do not agree which of the members will get certain items, and with disagreements, the trustee can sometimes be confused as to the actual wishes. Nonetheless, our employees do resolve many files eventually, and changes have been made to try and make the process faster. This is where it stands at this time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 635 – 6(2): Inuinnaqtun Language

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Languages and they concern the important issue of the Inuinnaqtun language in Kugluktuk.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the minister for his new role as Minister of Languages.

Mr. Speaker, during the Legislative Assembly's sitting of March 10, 2023, the minister's predecessor indicated that "we are proposing shifting the focus of Inuinnaqtun translations to prioritize areas that are either likely to improve revitalization or directly support access to service."

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support initiatives that help strengthen and preserve the Inuinnaqtun language.

Can the minister indicate what specific actions have been undertaken by his department to progress on this important priority? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Languages, Mr. Kaernek.

Hon. Joelle Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for his question. Yes, the previous minister last year, I believe stated that initiative, but the office is in Kugluktuk where Culture and Languages division is situated, and it was focussed on the Inuinnaqtun translations.

Additionally, it was in 2019 when the staff agreed to work on new initiatives to make the dialect more visible so that Inuinnaqtun dialect remains alive in Kugluktuk. Due to their agreement to assist in more support, the Department of Culture and Heritage continues to search for ways to revitalize the dialect and to make it visible throughout Nunavut, particularly in the Kitikmeot region.

The staff continues to search for ways to ensure the dialect is used more frequently, and the Inuinnaqtun dialect continues to disappear. We, at the Department of Culture and

Heritage, continue to look for different initiatives on supporting this dialect in Nunavut, and to date, they will undertake more planning on ways to make this dialect revitalized.

They have continued to search for more initiatives even up to now, starting with the focus on the dialect since 2019. As I stated before, they continue to work on developing more initiatives for the dialect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response. (interpretation ends) On June 14, 2018 the minister of the day tabled *Uqausivut 2.0*, the second phase of the government's plan to implement the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*.

Mr. Speaker, *Uqausivut 2.0*, indicates that one of its strategic priorities is to:

“Assess the feasibility of establishing Inuinnaqtun-specific language and cultural programming in the Qitirmiut, similar to those delivered by Piqqusilirivvik.”

Can the minister indicate what specific actions his department has undertaken to make progress on this priority? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Languages, Mr. Kaernerck.

Hon. Joelie Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* for the member's questions on the Uqausivut Implementation Plan. As of today, Culture and Heritage has the implementation plan to support the government's efforts to increase the number of Nunavummiut in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, in learning and using our language, while respecting the other official languages, English and French. Under *Uqausivut 2.0*, Culture and Heritage is in the planning process as to how we can implement and comprehensively plan to develop our Uqausivut across Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Assembly recently held a televised hearing on Nunavut's language laws for the first time. During this review, members were informed that there are approximately 500 Nunavummiut who speak Inuinnaqtun.

Mr. Speaker, I kindly encourage my constituents of Kugluktuk to continue learning and practising Inuinnaqtun at home, in schools, in the workplace, and in our community. It is extremely important we strengthen our language.

Can the minister clearly explain how his department is promoting the use of Inuinnaqtun? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Languages, Mr. Kaernerk.

Hon. Joelle Kaernerk: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member's questions on how we can preserve our language across Nunavut, especially with the language loss in Kugluktuk. Up to date, the Department of Culture and Heritage has supported through the Kitikmeot Heritage Society on how to improve the revitalization in our department. When it comes to language revitalization, the college in Cambridge Bay has supported the Inuinnaqtun language training in the Cambridge Bay campus. That's how it's happening.

The member is right that the number that they have sent is accurate. Just last month on my first day of swearing-in and then I went to a hearing and that was my first day to be in the hearing, so it was kind of nerve-racking for me, but it was quite an experience and a learning curve. Up to date, we support the Inuinnaqtun revitalization program and how we can promote the language in the Kitikmeot, not just in the Kitikmeot; throughout Nunavut. For that, thank you for the question, *quana*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Question 636 – 6(2): Grants and Contributions Policy

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Finance regarding the Government of Nunavut's Grants and Contributions Policy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of a recent letter that the entire cabinet would have received and in it, it is quoted, "Non-profit organizations are essential to our communities, providing programming and services for individuals and families, often filling the gaps where government services fall short. However, when these vital organizations are forced to navigate inefficient funding programs, this work is disrupted and causes harm to the staff, volunteers, and community members who rely on them."

Mr. Speaker, it also states that "If the current funding model continues without change, the future of non-profit organizations across Nunavut is threatened, and this harm will be felt in all regions of the territory."

Mr. Speaker, according to the 2021-22 Grants and Contributions Report provided by the Department of Finance, approximately 75 percent of grants and contributions funding goes to territorial corporations, municipal governments, and federal and Government of Nunavut partnerships, and out of the approximately 25 percent remaining, about 43 percent goes to non-profit organizations across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, out of the amounts approved, how much was returned unspent last fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't agree more in terms of the grants and contributions need to do better to be more inclusive and providing much-needed programs for Nunavummiut. I believe those grants and contributions should look at ways to be more inclusive and useful than ways to block people who spend an awful lot of energy to make life in Nunavut just that much better for everybody that can't help themselves and others.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have the detail that my colleague is looking for in front of me, but I look forward to providing it to my colleague and colleagues as soon as I have that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know, all across the different government departments, there are a number of different programs and although we appreciate those programs and I don't know if what the minister was saying is there needs to be additional programs delivered, I think we need to get the ones we're delivering right now right.

Mr. Speaker, in some information that was provided to me by the Nunavut Association for Non-Profit Organizations, it brings out that there was a survey regarding cash flow hardships that that organization invited non-profit organizations to complete and out of the respondents, 84 percent of survey respondents confirmed that they have experienced cash flow issues regarding grants and contributions. Another 84 percent of survey respondents have temporarily used money from other funds to overcome cash flow issues; 11 percent of survey respondents had to lay off staff because of hardships with cash flow. Nearly half the survey respondents have temporarily not paid themselves in order to pay for other expenses. Mr. Speaker, 68 percent of respondents confirmed that they struggled to use the full grant or contribution amount because the funding arrived too late.

What is the minister's position on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Government of Nunavut's Grants and Contributions Policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It could be more effective, Mr. Speaker. I believe we need to take a look at the Grants and Contributions Policy. I'll take a look at the survey that was done. It talks about percentages but not numbers. In terms of the numbers surveyed, is that a pool of a hundred or a thousand or whatever? Mr. Speaker, regardless of that number, it clearly speaks to the need that we can do better and we should do better, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-three non-profit organizations were invited to complete the survey and approximately two-thirds did.

Mr. Speaker, an example that was provided to me, I won't go into the specific department because it sounds like it's an issue across the entire Government of Nunavut, on February 16 the Government of Nunavut department put out a call for applications with a deadline of March 10. An organization provided an application on that day, on March 10. On May 24 they received an email that they would be approved. In July they received a contribution agreement and there was a request for a change of date, and they received the countersignature on August 11. As of October 26, when I received this information, it had still not received a payment. Mr. Speaker, that's over six months.

Mr. Speaker, in the recommendations that the Nunavut Association for Non-Profit Organizations made to the government, there were a number of immediate action items that were proposed, but I'm going to focus on one of them and I'm going to quote it, "Conduct an internal audit of Government of Nunavut departments that fund non-profit organizations to reveal one, the prevalence of delayed payments; two, the pain points in the process for both approvals and remittances; this is to better understand why the late payments are happening and to revise internal processes to prevent delayed payments in the future, and these results should be shared with the non-profit taskforce that hasn't been created yet," which was another immediate request of the organization.

Can the minister commit to conducting an internal audit regarding grants and contributions, the late payments and processes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Speaker, as I stated a couple of times during our exchange, we can do better and we need to do better as a government in terms of helping those who are trying to help us help others. I have that commitment and I'll continue with it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 637 – 6(2): Clare's Law for Nunavut

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was starting to get worried.

I would like to follow up Mr. Lightstone's questions to the Minister of Justice about the possibility of creating a Nunavut Clare's Law.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know whether or not the Minister of Justice has been communicating with other jurisdictions that have Clare's Law that they're implementing and what are those communications. What has the minister been able to learn, if anything, from other jurisdictions that have Clare's Law enacted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have and four Canadian jurisdictions have passed a version of Clare's Law. Saskatchewan and Alberta have implemented theirs, and Newfoundland and Labrador, along with Manitoba have passed their legislation but they're not in force yet. What we are learning, for example, is one of the jurisdictions that is implementing it is basically, it's a very rigid and long process that they have taken on. An example is from start to finish, you're looking at four months to get that information that the person initially asked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did mean to start off my line of questions with an acknowledgement and gratitude that this work is being done because it really does have the potential to save lives.

Mr. Speaker, in an earlier response, the Minister of Justice indicated that there were privacy issues related to perhaps including protection for children and access to information about registered sex offenders, in addition to what other provinces have included in their Clare's Law. I just wonder if the minister can expand a little bit on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This work that our department is going is relatively ongoing right now and getting the different types of researches being conducted in order to find out how to get to where we should be, which is allow for potential partners to find out whether domestic violence has been involved. That work is ongoing and to look at lessons learned with other jurisdictions.

As I mentioned on the children's side, the red flag was on the privacy. Privacy is paramount when a child is involved and that also, if somebody wants to find out about it, then it becomes restrictive. Those are the examples that I used earlier when I was being questioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, the National Sex Offender Registry, to my knowledge, doesn't include information about the targets or the victims of sexual violence. It includes the information about what a person's conviction is and what their conviction orders are. That database was created out of an inquiry into the murder of an 11-year-old child, Christopher Stephenson, who was murdered at the hands of a convicted pedophile on early release.

What we know about Clare's Law is that disclosure rules are that the police only provide information to a person who is at risk so that that person can make an informed decision about their safety and it cannot be shared with anybody else. In Clare's Law, before the

information about an offender is released to an individual who is enquiring, that individual must sign a confidentiality statement.

Mr. Speaker, I know I'm going on a little bit long here, but there are risk factors for victimization and when we're talking about children, the individual risk factors are caregivers in the home who are not a biological parent; family risk factors are families that have household members in jail or in prison, families experiencing other types of violence, including relationship violence; community risk factors are communities with high rates of violence and crime, communities with unstable housing, communities with families frequently experiencing food security.

Mr. Speaker, it makes sense to me, knowing that all of these risk factors virtually describe Nunavut and that the member is seeking and has been diligently seeking to take more steps to protect children in Nunavut, and while we are creating a new Act, we have an opportunity to create a Nunavut-specific Act that is related to our unique experience.

I will ask the minister once again whether or not the Minister of Justice is prepared to create a "Nunavutized" Clare's Law that goes a step beyond supporting just the potential victims of domestic violence and goes the further step to protect the children who are in the household as well by including the opportunity to look into a person's sex offender background. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud my members for raising this and providing input already into what we're looking into and I really appreciate the comments that are coming in this House when it comes to Clare's Law or what's potentially of Nunavut's version. Those are the very things that our staff is getting into. They're getting the analysis done and getting what type and how to do it and what's currently being practised in Canada. Will it be in that same version?

Those are the things that we're getting into and I encourage these types of discussions continue and be provided to myself and to the department in terms of what kind of version of Clare's Law we will want or not want. That work is being done right now in a focused setting now. We didn't have it as a separate, but now we have dedicated resources doing in-depth analyses and looking into whether legislation will be needed for this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members, be aware that the time allotted for question period is now over. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickers.

Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters**Committee Report 023 – 6(2): Report on the Review of the 2023 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Child and Family Services in Nunavut**

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present the *Report of the Standing Committee on the Review of the 2023 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Child and Family Services in Nunavut*.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held its televised hearing on this report from September 19 to 20, 2023, in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly. Transcripts of the hearing are available on the Assembly's website.

Mr. Speaker, senior officials from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and witnesses from the Government of Nunavut's departments of Family Services, Health, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Human Resources participated in the hearing. The standing committee thanks all the witnesses for their contributions.

Mr. Speaker, the standing committee's report contains three sets of formal recommendations directed to the Government of Nunavut and relate to:

- The historical context of the Auditor General's Report;
- The Government of Nunavut's proposed whole-of-government approach; and
- The Department of Family Services' Strategic Plan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the standing committee be received by the House and entered into the record as read. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member has moved that the report of the standing committee be received by the House and entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: It is agreed.

Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Committee Report 024 – 6(2): Bill 23, Nursing Professions Act

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 23, *Nursing Professions Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill, as amended and reprinted, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*See Appendix for full text of Committee Motion 23 – 6(2).

Speaker: Thank you. The bill will be placed on the order paper for Friday, November 3.

Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Member for Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 180 – 6(2): 2021-22 Nunavut Emergency Management Annual Report

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the 2021-22 Nunavut Emergency Management Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Hon. Member for Health, Mr. Main.

Tabled Document 181 – 6(2): Chief Public Health Officer’s 2022-23 Tobacco Control and Smoke-Free Places Act Annual Report

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the Chief Public Health Officer’s 2022-23 *Tobacco Control and Smoke-Free Places Act* Annual Report. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Tabled Document 182 – 6(2): Correspondence from the Minister of Community and Government Services in Response to Oral Question 584 – 6(2)

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you will recall, I asked a number of questions in the House last week concerning the subject of drinking water infrastructure.

I am pleased to table today a copy of the Minister of Community and Government Services’ recent correspondence to me on this issue.

The minister’s letter contains important information that will be of interest to all Members of the House and I encourage all members to review it with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Tabled Document 183 – 6(2): Air Transportation Services for the Kitikmeot Region

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a copy of correspondence dated October 30, 2023 from the president of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association concerning the issue of air transportation in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate minister on the issue during our fall sitting and I encourage all members to review the document with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34 and Tabled Documents 1 – 6(2), 120 – 6(2), 163 – 6(2), and 174 – 6(2) with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

Before we proceed with the committee, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:28 and Committee resumed at 15:50*

Item 19: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: please refer to Item 19 in the *Orders of the Day* which lists all of the items before the committee. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with Bill 31 and carry on with the review of the 2024-25 capital appropriation for the Department of Health, followed by the review of the Department of Finance, which includes Arctic College, and then followed by the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Do committee members agree that we first deal with Bill 31?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 31 – Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2024-2025 – Health – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main, do you have witnesses that you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the witnesses to appear before the committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. Just for the record, Minister Main, please introduce your officials to the committee and then I'll go back to Ms. Quassa and her line of questioning. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm joined again by Deputy Minister Megan Hunt and Executive Director of Corporate Services Greg Babstock. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Yesterday we left off with Ms. Quassa asking some questions. You may continue, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have just a couple of questions left.

For capital funding for 2024-25, the department's draft capital estimates include \$5 million for ongoing lifecycle projects. Documentation included with the draft capital estimates indicates that the total cost for proposed ongoing lifecycle projects in 2024-25 exceeds \$11 million. How will the department decide which projects will be funded? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) With regard to this information that we have presented, we decided to take a little bit of a different approach in terms of presenting it where we have given kind of a total list of the projects we anticipate that need to be addressed, going out to fiscal year 2026-27.

In terms of deciding which ones will be dealt with first, due to the limited budget, as we've had to do for a number of years, we will be prioritizing health and safety hazards to the staff or public. There are some specifics there on page 2 of the substantiation sheets in terms of what exactly we will be looking at. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for pointing out where we can find the information.

(interpretation ends) My last question is: what communities are currently being considered for health centre renovation or expansion projects? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We have a prioritization list, a priority ranking that we use, and Qikiqtarjuaq has been at the top of the list for a number of years. We're really pleased to see that project moving forward.

Following Qikiqtarjuaq, Baker Lake is the next community listed. Following Baker Lake, we are looking at Kugluktuk, and then Arviat would be the fourth on the current priority listing; Kugaaruk at number five. I could keep going, but there are a number of factors that we look at. We look at population growth, the age of the facility, the condition of the facility, so it's kind of a multifaceted prioritization that we look at. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name of have on my list, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister and your officials. My fellow member asked partially what I want to ask about. There has been the issue of additions to health centres, and for mental health issues, police cells are used. Although it might be a medical issue, there is a lack of facilities at the health centre. At some health centres, would they be receiving, for those under mental stress who don't have a place to stay, could there be a safe room at the health centre? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. (interpretation ends) I think the member highlights a really important consideration around mental health. That's a huge issue for the department as well as the whole territory, and it is really sad that some of our communities don't have calming rooms. You look at new facilities such as Kinngait, for example, there is a calming room in there which means that the RCMP cells don't need to be used in most cases for individuals facing mental health crises.

Currently, we don't have any plans to add on calming rooms to communities where facilities don't have them. We have stressed repeatedly to our federal partners, our position or our desire to see federal resources brought into a health infrastructure for Nunavut. We've pointed out to them repeatedly, that we are a young territory. We have a huge infrastructure deficit, and that federal dollars would help us to achieve better health outcomes for Nunavummiut.

It is something that we are willing to take into consideration, the ideal of adding on calming rooms for communities like Pond Inlet, but as of right now, we don't have any definite plans. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the response. This is a real issue. When people are going through a mental breakdown, it's not the police you want to deal with in that kind of situation, which makes it more adverse. Thank you for visiting the community of Pond Inlet and seeing the health centre and the community. I am glad we also have a birthing centre or room. Sometimes it is occupied as well.

Our health centre is relatively new. It has been 20 years now and it is becoming too small for the size of the community as we are growing. I am wondering about the communities that are growing and require health facilities. I realize that all communities require facilities. Perhaps if it is over occupied, it would show that it is too small. What do you consider when you are looking to assess funds? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we look at the growth in population of a community and also take that into consideration which one is going to be a priority.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, the important thing that I would like to highlight for the member is that Health would like to see us getting onto a regular pattern of moving forward on these infrastructure priorities. The real frustrating thing with Qikiqtarjuaq for us has been that we've known for many years that it's a need.

Some of the initial planning work was done and then we saw a long delay in between that and construction. If we're going to get through our list of priority health centres needing expansion or replacement, we would like to see a regular cadence of health centres coming forward for consideration to the Assembly.

Again, we see big potential in partnership with the federal government. We continue pushing forward resources in that regard. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you, minister. I wish to move to a different matter or subject. Currently, albeit I am unsure if I can query you on this subject, but at this point, can you provide an answer on how many of our precious elders, since in our community of Pond Inlet, we say that elders are precious.

How many of our precious elders are currently awaiting the completion of a facility that is called in English (interpretation ends) Nunavut based long-term care facility (interpretation) if you have the number, how many elders are this list, (interpretation ends) how many are on the waiting list? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: Right now, on our waitlist there are 15. That includes the waitlist for permanent placement as well as respite, which would be a short-term placement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, minister. Once construction is completed in Rankin Inlet, are they all going to have beds available there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the Rankin Inlet long-term care facility and once it's opened and operational, how we will allocate those beds, it's not going to be a simple decision.

It's not first come first serve, there is admission criteria that we are working on. It's being finalized. We're looking at incorporating considerations around age, the home region of the individual, the health status, as well as the years of placement in Embassy West in Ottawa in order to prioritize which individuals are offered a spot first.

It will be a choice that will be given. Individuals will not be told 'you are being moved to Rankin Inlet.' They are allowed to decline.

In terms of the criteria that we've developed, it was developed by Health staff with support from Director of Ethics at the Ottawa hospital. I hope that answers the question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) How many projected in the coming years: 5, 10, 15 years for elders that will need a bed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The last time a formal study was done in terms of the demand, or the projected demand, was in 2015 and the number of beds required was 156. I'm looking at my staff here. 156 to 2035.

I'll caution that, put a qualifier on that. That was a kind of an initial needs assessment and as part of that needs assessment it was recommended to move to take some further consideration and drill down further in terms of the needs and develop a strategy basically. That hasn't happen to date.

156 beds by 2035; that's the best estimate that we have at this time. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you minister. The last assessment was done in 2015. Are you looking at how many beds will be needed to date?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We don't have any plans at this point to develop further forecasting, but it could be something, for example, that flows out of the senior's strategy if that's a recommendation under the senior strategy, or an action item. We would certainly be willing to work on that.

As I mentioned yesterday, when we look at long-term care, its not a simple matter in terms of what the demand is going to be. There are things that we can do outside of long-term care that could dramatically affect the demand. I will use as an example: A program to support family care givers to provide them an income, or to provide them a subsidy.

That's something that in other jurisdictions has been put in place, and from my understanding could have a significant effect on the demand for long-term care beds. I just put that out there as an example. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman along with the minister. Now, I wonder if the government has contemplated the idea of establishing facilities for our elders in the smaller communities. I know that no funding has been established for elder care facilities in the smaller communities, although we too desire our elders to remain closer to home in the non-regional centres.

The principle is to keep our elders closer to home, and recently I had a meeting with the Vice President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Mr. Irgaut during February and I put across the idea of requesting funding for Pond Inlet to construct an elder's care facility.

NTI has funding for affordable housing construction, and I requested that NTI consider this initiative and I asked for support to build an elder care facility because we would be able to house high arctic elders in Pond Inlet instead of going to Ottawa. As an example, we can become a hub facility for elders from Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord and perhaps even Clyde River.

My query then to you is: have you worked with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to look at possibly supporting the idea of building elder care facilities in the smaller communities or in the high arctic region? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the *Katujjiluta Mandate*, it is written and in following that written principle in the mandate, our focus is to work with other bodies such as NTI, and I have had the opportunity to meet with the executive previously on various matters.

Actually, we have had meetings with their senior managers, and our senior management officials have regularly scheduled meetings at that level, and additionally, we also meet with the elected officials at the executive levels. The issue of elder care facilities has been at the forefront of the meetings, as they form part of the discussions surrounding our elders being a priority.

We have discussed ways to keep facilities closer, such as satellite centres in Gjoa Haven, Igloodik and Arviat for our elders to be cared for. This is part of our initial discussions to begin the initiative, however, we are looking at avenues where we can work in partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and we have an open door policy, and welcome any ideas that can lead to further debates in our future, which we could conduct in the short-term future.

Funding is obviously our biggest constraint and usually due to limited funding amounts, we need to try to garner as much funding support and agreements to move forward. We would need to look at contribution agreements to support our projects, but currently we do not have any agreements, however (interpretation ends) we do have work plan in terms of our future activities, areas of focus with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Elders' facilities is one of the items on that work plan, so it has been highlighted. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize because I summarized the issue too succinctly. I also thank the minister for that. (interpretation ends) Is there a commitment from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated for them to help with funding? If not, why not meet with them? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We don't have any commitments. If there were any commitments, I think that would be for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to announce themselves. It wouldn't be our place to announce things on their behalf.

As I mentioned, we do meet with them, my staff meet with them. It's a very important relationship to the Department of Health on many fronts. So we are going to keep having those meetings at the working level as well as elected official level.

I really thank them for their support, we had a trilateral meeting this summer with Minister Hajdu and Minister Holland, those are the ministers for Indigenous Services Canada as well as Health Canada, as well as officials from the Department of Health, and then representatives from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

It was a very exciting meeting. There was a lot of areas of shared focus between us and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. I hate to brag about a meeting or get excited about a meeting, but there was something there and I'm hoping that it's going to be beneficial for Nunavut in the long term. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Minister, welcome back to you and your officials.

(interpretation) I would like to start off by questioning this issue on page 2 of the minister's opening comments on (interpretation ends) Nunavummiut elders within territory and closer to home.

(interpretation) I am confused about the choice of the wording used, where it states elders will remain home, as I would prefer them receiving this care within their home community. My question is: (interpretation ends) Why not at home? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I appreciate the member's sentiment and I understand when you look at the circumstances and hardship that families go through when elders have to, or any Nunavut resident has to, leave their home for health reasons, or to seek care its very difficult. There's no way that I'm going to pretend its not difficult.

I think the question that was asked yesterday by the Member for Baker Lake around what's next after Cambridge Bay and after Iqaluit facilities are developed, is still what's next? I think that's a key consideration that the Department of Health, our other partner departments as well as, I would hope the regular members, and all Members of this Assembly could help us to answer.

As I mentioned yesterday, we don't have a definitive plan saying this will be the next community, this will be the next community, but if it continues to be raised as an issue of concern and priority, I think, you know, I would hope to see plans come into place and

investments start to flow if that's the desire of the Assembly, either during the life of this government, or the next. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When my colleague was asking questions you spoke about butterfly homes and greener homes. If you can explain to me exactly what these are so that we can understand what you were pertaining to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When you look at models like the Greenhouse Project, those are alternative models of care for older adults with complex care issues and needs.

The more conventional approach to long-term care is institutional and that's what we currently employ in our continuing care facilities, and that's the model that we are going with in terms of the Rankin Inlet facility.

There are positive and negatives with going for a conventional model, or an alternative model, but I think our circumstances in Nunavut are quite unique and that's where, as part of the mandate implementation plan, we are interest in looking at the Greenhouse model in particular to see if that's one that could be transferred into Nunavut. Could we pilot it and or use it in Nunavut? We are still in the very initial stages of that work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to Greenhouse that you just spoke of, and also the Rankin Inlet long-term care facility, can the minister elaborate how much it would cost for the Greenhouse facility?

Compare it to the overall costs of construction of the elder care facility based in Rankin Inlet. I have an idea of the actual parameters of the construction costs, if you have this information available, can you provide an estimate of the construction costs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have any specifics around the costs. It would be the capital costs and then the operating costs. I don't have any specifics in terms of comparing, but one thing that I can share with the member that we are working on, is developing a business case to create a long-term care division within the Department of Health.

It's not in front of the House, just as of yet, but it's something that we want to move forward on given all the attention and the expansions that are coming down the line in Nunavut around long-term care. That's something we envision would be of great use to further strengthen long-term care. That is creating a long-term care division within the Department of Health. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, minister. I would also like to ask the minister if he can give us the information on the cost of the greenhouse and also for the operation? Can you provide that information to the members here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can commit to that, in terms of providing some background information. As well, if there is an interest to meet on this in-person and have some discussions, I would certainly be open to that with the members who may be interested. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, minister. I am interested in meeting with you because I am very interested in seeing if the price is lower so that elders could be in the long-term facility.

I'd like to move on to another topic. The health centres and hospitals, for example in Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, and Cambridge Bay: has the department considered if they can increase the size of these health centres? I would like to hear if you have any plans to make the Rankin Inlet health centre building larger. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) For Rankin Inlet, in terms of the priority listing that was mentioned earlier, Rankin Inlet is included on there and it is currently number six on the priority listing. That's where we look at population projections, the facility, condition, the area or the size of the health centre itself. In the priority rankings it is currently at six. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that the Rankin Inlet regional health centre is servicing other communities. They know the number of patients

that go there in the Kivalliq. Is the regional health centre large enough to see other patients from other communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think the priority ranking is the best gauge to go by. At number six in the ranking, it is closer to the top of the list. It's safe to say it has been identified as one of our facilities that's been flagged for expansion, in terms of our listing. We wouldn't be looking at a replacement of the facility.

I have to repeat what I said earlier: Health wants to see a regular pattern of health centres getting expanded or replaced. We would really not be wanting to see years of delay like we saw with Qikiqtarjuaq. If we can knock off Qikiqtarjuaq and move onto Baker Lake, Kugluktuk, Arviat, Kugaaruk, Rankin Inlet, and keep going, there is so much need when we look at the health facilities across Nunavut. We really want to move things quicker in the future. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I brought up that question was based on the services available in Rankin Inlet, as there aren't enough medical travellers to build a boarding home, yet if you add this elder care facility, relatives will want to go see their beloved elders.

Most of the hotels are often overbooked, meaning that rooms are rarely available. I would now like to ask if the capital funding has been secured, allowing this facility to be built and I now query you on when it will be added to the capital plans? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of a boarding home in Rankin Inlet, if we were to move in that direction, I think we would be wanting to use the same model that's used for all our other boarding homes, except for Churchill where the government of Nunavut does not normally own or build the boarding homes. They are either leased or they are run by a private entity and then the relationship is between the Department of Health, Indigenous Services Canada, and the contractor.

The member makes a good point in terms of whether or not the long-term care facility in Rankin would increase the amount of travel into Rankin Inlet. It's something that we are willing to take into consideration.

There is another issue in Rankin Inlet that's new to the overall picture, which is the development of a private dental clinic that is moving towards offering sedation for older

children and adults. So there are a few different moving pieces which may affect the work towards feasibility of a boarding home in Rankin Inlet. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister for his response. Moving on, the health centre's staff are often raising concerns. I know this is in regard to O&M, but the staff have safety issues, especially for mental health. The lack of mental health spaces is a big issue. ...(inaudible)...

(interpretation ends) Thank you. (interpretation) I am talking about the safety of the Inuit medical travellers who may suffer from mental health issues and to ensure the safety of the health centre staff, and perhaps provide more security guards. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) It is an important issue especially when we talk about safety for our employees. It is also about safety for anyone who may be in the facility.

Currently we have five communities that don't have security services and over time the amount of incidents is increasing. We have 20 communities with security services right now. It's an important piece for the public as well as our employees. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): This will be by my final question and it's going to the same department. (interpretation ends) In May of 2022, the Assembly approved carryover funding to carry out repairs at the Rankin Inlet wellness centre, the old health centre, which was renovated into public health care, home care and birthing program.

What is the current status of this renovation and has any delivered service been affected? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That project was put out to tender, but unfortunately it was not successfully closed. We will be publishing the tender again sometime this month for that project. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my actual last question. In the minister's statement, the minister always says (interpretation ends) closer to home (interpretation) for the past two years. Now, pregnant women currently have to be sent to Winnipeg for child births, and I ask if any type of plans for a birthing centre in Rankin Inlet in the near future? That formulates my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So we are currently in the process of rebuilding our midwifery capacity in territory. The Rankin Inlet birthing centre has been closed, or not closed, but not accepting pregnant individuals from the region for some time now. It has been mostly related to staffing issues.

We are working on a rebuild, you know it has two main components. The first component is legislative. Looking at the *Midwifery Act* and how that can be modernized, and the second component is on the training and employment model. We are looking for a way to strengthen Inuit, strengthen the pathways, and the employment opportunities for Inuit in midwifery.

That's something that's important to the department and the member pointed out, it would lead to services being delivered closer to home, babies delivered ideally. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman for recognizing me again. I was asking questions yesterday and (interpretation ends) I should have added this in. It relates to, because of the long delays, over the years... .

The question is for Qikiqtarjuaq health centre and my question, Mr. Chairman, is that are you expecting any delays with Qikiqtarjuaq health centre and if that be, what is Health, your department as minister to prevent delays of construction? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If, through this appropriation, we secure design funding, as we move through design to construction the timelines will get more and more reliable. It is always possible there could be delays, but we are not aware of any factors that would cause that at this point.

One thing that maybe be an issue for Qikiqtarjuaq, due to the long delay, the construction cost estimate is quite likely going to be needed to be adjusted as we have seen a lot of inflation over the last couple years. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I do believe that the delays also could affect from the tendering from other departments or the suppliers, so I just wanted to mention that as well. I am just a bit worried in a way. Could that happen again, delays for the new health centre that will start being constructed next year?

Going on to my next question. (interpretation) The name of the place, Aqqusariaq, the healing facility. Can the minister help us understand the name 'Aqqusariaq'? I have heard two terms, *aqqusiriah* and *aqqusariaq*. This is the first time that I have heard it called Aqqusariaq. I was just worried that the name may not have been settled. It would be good if all the people in Nunavut can know the real name of the place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a qallunaaq, I can't say if it's good or not right, I'm still learning in Inuktitut. However, I don't know if the name that's been adopted for the facility is adequate or if it needs to be adjusted. We can look into the matter further and maybe the Department of Culture and Heritage can help us in case we need to resettle the name. We can meet with that department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was passing by that area and I read the sign and I couldn't understand it, after the sign was put up. Maybe the language authority can help with the title of the name or the term used, because it was like this. It was called Aqqusariaq during question period, and then some other members called it Aqqusariaq.

I would like to give this matter back to you so you can look at it. The name of the facility will have to be settled properly. I know it has a name, but I don't understand the other term. I only understand one of the terms. I would like the department to revisit the naming of the facility. That is my only concern, Mr. Chairman. The Languages Commissioner could get involved too. It would be good if they could all take part in naming the facility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. I thank my colleague for talking about this. We can look more into the matter. If we need to meet with the Department of Culture and Heritage, we can. We will work on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Ms. Killiktee, are you done? (interpretation ends) Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Taloyoak community health centre was closed due to a fuel spill in August of 2022 which required extensive remediation. How does the Department of Health work with Community and Government Services to assess the condition of the health centres across Nunavut and monitor infrastructure issues? I'll have a follow up question after that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like Mr. Babstock to respond to that if you'll allow it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again because it is a very important question.

We take fuel remediation issues very seriously, as we have had several over the past couple years.

With respect to how we work with Community and Government Services, we work hand in hand with them. With respect to identifying the remediation that's required and then procuring the proper professionals to get that work done, as had been the case Taloyoak spill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Babstock for your answer. Has that work been completed up to today? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: As it's the same line of questioning, I'll go directly to Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you once again, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the work is progressing. So upon immediate identification of the issue, work to remediate the actual building itself and to repair the issues that happened in the boiler room where the spill took place.

The remaining part of the remediation to the soil beneath the building is going to be taking place next summer. We have been assured that is in a stable condition and is not to lead to any additional issues. It can wait until we can get the proper equipment in there to complete the remediation as under the building it makes it a little bit more of a challenge, naturally. However, that remediation work is scheduled to take place next summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Babstock, for clarification. I'll now move on to my other constituent community.

Information provided by the Minister of Health during appearance before the Fifth Assembly's Committee of the Whole indicated that new health centre projects would be undertaken in Qikiqtarjuaq, followed by Baker Lake, Kugluktuk, Kugaaruk, Rankin Inlet, and Coral Harbour. The new health centre for Qikiqtarjuaq is the only new health centre project included in the five-year capital plan with a request for funding for design work in 2024.

Now my question will be: when will Kugaaruk see a capital plan and decisions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for the question. As I mentioned several times, this is why Health wants to get onto a regular cadence or pattern of replacing, renovating, and expanding health centres because we know that communities like Kugaaruk need these facilities. They needed them yesterday and service delivery is being impacted by infrastructure issues. Kugaaruk's forecast would be to have it start planning by 2027-28 for Kugaaruk. That's contingent on a number of different factors, whether we're able to move on the projects that are ahead of Kugaaruk in the priority listing. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister Main. I'll follow up with that. Mental health is a growing area of concern across Nunavut. Under the department's ongoing lifecycle budget, there are plans to renovate three facilities to provide mental health and addictions services. My question is: what three facilities are being renovated and where? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Apologies for the delay.

Currently we have work on the books for a facility in Arviat that would be a surplus building that's being brought forward for consideration or moving towards converting it into programming space. There is some work in Iqaluit. I believe it's a Greenstone Building. The third one eludes me at the moment. I apologize, but I can...oh. The Rankin Inlet Wellness Centre repairs, that's the third one. For all those projects, they're existing assets that are either being repurposed or upgraded. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had asked a while ago during our committee meetings that my constituent wanted a new location for mental health for Kugaaruk. Did the department check for options of a new location for mental health? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have that information in front of me, but I am willing to consult with my officials, specifically the mental health and addictions staff in terms of what work has been done with Kugaaruk specifically. It's quite exciting to see the work that's being done across Nunavut by our paraprofessionals. It's really touching when you get to see the hands-on programming that they're doing with youth, with different groups at the community level.

I'm really encouraged by the energy and the positive moving forward that we're seeing in that regard. I'm trying to tie my comments to infrastructure, but the exciting part about it is that we don't need necessarily a hospital to deliver this type of programming. We just need a multipurpose space like a classroom or a building. It could be an outdoor activity. It could be a shed if it's for young men or young adults. It's very exciting work and I will get back to the member with regard to Kugaaruk. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. I will be looking forward to the information that you will provide me.

I'll move on to elder care or bringing elders closer to home from the long-term care facility in Ottawa. This is for Kitikmeot residents to make them closer to home. During our first day of the sitting, I had questioned the minister about options of moving elders from Ottawa to locations such as Yellowknife and Edmonton. The minister indicated that a request for proposals was sent out in 2017 within a 50-kilometre radius with no response and only Embassy West responded.

Now my question is: has the department sent a request for proposals in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023? That is my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the need for specialized accommodations for elders, as the member mentioned, the previous request for proposals only had one facility apply and make it through to the end of that process and that was Embassy West. We have reached out in response to requests from the Kitikmeot region.

We have reached out to Yellowknife. Unfortunately, we have been told that they have their own capacity issues, dealing with their own aging population in the Northwest Territories, but we are planning and working on a request for proposals that will be going out seeking those services and we will be looking at regional considerations given as part of that process.

For the Kitikmeot, we would be looking at either facilities within the vicinity of Edmonton or Yellowknife. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is just a comment. I highly recommend that the department try to get our Kitikmeot residents closer to home, as I described, in Yellowknife and Edmonton. It would benefit the Kitikmeot residents, as we're just a flight away from the Kitikmeot to get to Yellowknife or even to Edmonton, without any stops in between. What's to prevent from us Kitikmeot MLAs to push the government to at least get our elders closer to home? It's a recommendation. I want the department to push and to make sure we move our residents who are at Embassy West to at least get closer to home. It's just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm done now.

Chairman: Would you like to comment on the comment? Minister Main, please.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Comment taken and the member and I have been in touch on this topic in the recent past. I understand and feel for the families that are affected by this. Our desire is to be able to present more options for families in the Kitikmeot and that's why we're moving forward on that request for proposals that I mentioned earlier. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two topics that I would like to bring up, following up on matters that I raised last year.

I think, maybe in the spring sitting, I had asked the Minister of Health about expanding pediatric services due to long backlogs in Ottawa and the stress that it placed on children and their families. I was just curious if the minister would be able to provide an update on any current or potential capital investments that Health is considering to expand pediatric services in territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We currently don't have any plans in that regard. It's a bit of a puzzle piece in terms of the space allocation within the Qikiqtani General Hospital currently. A pediatric specialized ward or space has been scoped out in the past. However, we would need to displace some

of the other existing services from the facility and we don't have a ready location to send them or to put them.

With that being said, we are expanding our programs in territory. Although on the capital side, we're not seeing projects come forward, on the programming side, on the O&M side, there are expansions and new services that are coming online, so we do see progress there. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to follow up on the minister's comments. I recall that over the last several years, the Department of Health has made significant strides in investing in expanding pediatric services in territory, which I was very happy to see. The minister had indicated that Health is continuing to expand its services of care. I hope that was in reference specifically towards pediatrics.

My next question: as Health has been expanding pediatric services and there was previous mention of a pediatric ward, I think, in the minister's statement a number of years ago, if Health were to open up a specific pediatric ward, what kind of capital investment would that require? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't want to speculate in terms of the magnitude. That would be something that would be fleshed out through the planning and design process. I'll leave it at that. We don't have any specific numbers to offer at this point. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'll just leave the pediatrics for now, but I will likely be coming back to that in the winter sitting when we review Health's O&M. I'm very much interested to find out how many children are sent out of territory for what specific services and same for children in territory, but we will get back to that in the winter.

I would like to come back to another issue that I had raised in the past. Over the years, I have been watching Health's transient housing budget steadily increase. I recognize that as an O&M issue, but in the past, I have asked if Health has considered constructing housing specifically for staff or transient staff as well. This is going to be a two-part question, both O&M and capital; very related.

Would the minister be able to update the House on the current actual transient housing expenditures and how many units that those are for? Has there been any further consideration to putting in a special budget request or business case to build an 18-plex like the NHC is partnering with the NCC to build at a very reasonable rate? I think that

having specific purpose-built health care professional residential units would be beneficial to employee morale and retention of much-needed health care professionals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) For transient housing right now in Iqaluit, we have a stock of 48 units and we work very closely with the Nunavut Housing Corporation. We do have a few, let's say for example, the housing units that are attached to or a part of health centres. They're managed in a bit of a different way, but the short answer is that we don't have delegated authority to work on housing projects. That's the piece that belongs to the Nunavut Housing Corporation and so that's where we work with them very closely with regard to our needs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The City of Iqaluit has been going through a housing crisis for a number of years. The CMHC annual report has indicated that Iqaluit has had a 0 percent vacancy on the residential market for four consecutive years. By taking 48 units off of the market that Iqaluit desperately need and providing it to transient employees, which I also understand is also very desperately needed, it has a negative impact on the community.

The last time I had asked this question to the minister, he had a very similar response as it's the NHC's area. Considering the positive impact that purpose-built units would have on the department and the community and the government and Nunavummiut that receive health care, I would like to ask the minister to consider putting forward a business case or a special request to the Nunavut Housing Corporation to utilize their partnership with the NCC to build at least 48 units at a very reasonable cost.

Again, I just want to ask the minister to consider this matter and whether or not he would build a business case and make a special request. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I could commit to something like that, but I would ask the member to commit to give us unlimited money first and then... I'm saying that just in joking.

We work with the Nunavut Housing Corporation quite closely. For example, on Aqquariaq and the projected housing needs there, it's something that we're working with them very closely because any time you bring a new facility online, it can have a housing impact and we don't want to be looking at just the health centre, for example, or just the treatment centre. We know that there are going to be staff who will need housing

as part of those facilities and so that's where the relationship with the housing corporation is so important. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's response with regard to unlimited funding. I don't know if I have the authority to do that, but I'm sure I would be more than happy to approve any sort of capital request that the minister would put forward to the Assembly in this regard.

I strongly believe that if a business case was developed, the Department of Finance would see the cost benefit. Well, considering the cost of renting 48 units compared to the cost of building, I think the payback period would be relatively short, but I'll leave it at that and maybe that's something that I can bring up with the Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main, do you want to respond to that?

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I appreciate the member's questions and comments. We are looking at the housing issues and the housing needs here in Iqaluit quite closely in terms of developing a concept for housing that would be located close to the hospital. At this point, it's just a concept, so I'm hesitant to share anything beyond that, but I wanted to mention that it is something that we are aware of and working on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would support unlimited funds if the minister wants to build houses in Arviat for the nurses and close to the health centre there, but if it were for the other communities, then it might be debatable.

First, I would like to go the health centre in Arviat. The minister should be and I'm sure he is aware and he stated earlier that it's on renovation or replacement or expansion. I'm sure the minister is aware that in the wintertime they have to use electric heaters to heat the place. The pipes do freeze at times and if we can just get a comment on when is the earliest that work can be done to bring Arviat's undersized health centre so that it will meet the needs of the community. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Currently we have the Arviat Health Centre expansion slated to start planning in 2026-27 and, as I mentioned earlier, it's contingent on a number of different factors; funding availability, other projects moving forward, the ones that are ahead of the project in the queue, but in terms of those facility issues that are mentioned, we're well aware that the

current facility is problematic from the maintenance and upkeep standpoint. We're also very aware that it's undersized for the size of the community.

When we look at things like specialized services and delivering care closer to home, we're limited in communities like Arviat by the infrastructure. That's why we want to move more projects forward and that's why we have been pushing our federal partners on infrastructure as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is still sticking with the Arviat Health Centre. I don't know if this is O&M, but I believe it would be capital. The minister should be aware too that in the winter when there is snow, if you're not fairly healthy, you can't get into the nursing station on your own because there's about a 45-degree angle to get into the nursing station. If I can get the minister's comment on how that can be fixed so that unhealthy people or less mobile people can also go into the nursing station when it's slippery. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Those concerns have been communicated to the department as well as the MLA.

In terms of addressing those issues, we do have a project right now under ongoing lifecycle which is slated. It focuses on a lot of mechanical issues in the health centre, some of the issues that the member was mentioning, but we are able to take a look at the access ramp area and see if there isn't a way to improve the safety for patients and staff. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going on to another topic there, in the minister's opening comments on page 2, this is about the long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet, "This new facility will allow the provision of high-quality and culturally appropriate services to all levels of care for Nunavummiut elders within the territory and closer to home.

In examining options to achieve our stated goals creatively, efficiently, and sustainably for long-term care, work continues on the planning of [territorial] long-term care facilities for both the Qikiqtaaluk and Kitikmeot regions."

My question would be that the Premier said that the elder care strategy should be done in September. They've had two years to work on it.

It is on record that the minister did oppose the long-term care facilities for both regions roughly three years ago because there was no long-term care strategy. I will quote the minister in his previous role from the *Hansard* from November 5, 2020:

“There’s a huge need for a comprehensive strategy on elders’ care in Nunavut. Such a strategy would help identify the gaps at the community level which are leading to institutionalization, which puts stress on families and elders, and eventually leads to poorer health outcomes. A strategy would help identify the types of infrastructure needed, including senior-specific housing and supported living environments. It would identify opportunities to partner with organizations outside of the government. It would help determine which levels of care can be provided in which community.”

The strategy still is not here. It’s close, but it is still not here. I just asked the minister what changed. The minister must support these two projects now when the minister didn’t in his previous role. Can we get an explanation? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That is a really interesting question. I mean, I think the quote was from the previous government in terms of debates that happened here in the House.

At the beginning of this sixth government, I was privileged to be put here by my colleagues and the job of health minister is one that I am very privileged, I feel privileged, and it’s one that I enjoy immensely, and sometimes it’s very heavy. It’s such a privilege to be here as minister and I serve with the pleasure of the House; the pleasure of the members.

At the beginning of the sixth government, we developed our mandate together and the two facilities that the member is questioning on were identified in the mandate. I think that is kind of my job as minister is to carry through and implement those items from the mandate that we all developed.

I hope that answers the question that was posed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The exact two projects were slated in the last government, the minister is right, and I did quote the *Hansard* from November 5, 2020.

Mr. Chairman, those two projects were slated to be done. In the minister’s previous role, the motion was put forward in standing committee and the projects were deleted. One of the main reasons that they were deleted was because a lot of members said that there was no senior care strategy.

A lot of the members here have been talking about wanting elder care closer to home. The minister, in his previous role as MLA, spoke to the motion when the motion was on the floor in Committee of the Whole to delete the funds and I will quote it.

“What we’re doing on this motion, Madam Chairperson, is debating and that, I believe, is one of the key functions of the Assembly is to allow for free debate of ideas.

First of all, I’ll say that I’m disappointed that as regular members, we have been put in this situation where we have to debate an item. I believe that the inadequacy of the government’s planning process to date for long-term care facilities has been made clear. I feel that it’s regrettable that we have yet to date not seen this government recognize the dissatisfaction from the regular members regarding the plan that exists, and I say ‘plan’ that exists. There is no publicly available document that details these three regional facilities, where elders are going to be relocated from, or how many elders will be relocated each year.

Madam Chairperson, we all want to see an end to the use of the Embassy West facility, but I would argue that it’s not enough just to keep our elders in territory. What we need to aim for is to keep our elders in community...” and again, in community.

We still haven’t seen planned document. Can I ask the minister again: what has changed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have to give one correction there. You mentioned that the motion was made in standing committee, but if I recall correctly, the minister of the day stated in the House that he did not appear before standing committee. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I think the decisions that were made in the fifth government were made in the fifth government. The regular members were different, many of them, and the cabinet was different individuals to a certain extent.

I think that when we look at any decision or debate, it depends on the individuals who are at the table. That was a decision that was made at the time and those projects were voted down, as the member mentioned, and they didn’t proceed at that time.

In terms of from then ‘til now, the member asked what has changed, I think that if we look at the current mandate, one of the items in the mandate is the development of a senior strategy, which is being led by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Another thing that is in the mandate is identified as looking at expansions to existing elder care facilities. Gjoa Haven, Igloolik, and Arviat are ones that are mentioned specifically in my opening comments here. I think that is where the member wanted me to go in terms of comparing then and now

To summarize it, a number of things have changed. Elder care is still a very important issue. One of the things maybe that haven’t changed is that we do hear members

representing smaller communities wanting to see facilities in care in their communities. That is something we have talked about in the past couple of days at some length in terms of, in this seat where I am now, I think it's important that the department be receptive and consider the ideas that are put forward by members representing smaller communities, specifically on long-term care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my point. I have heard from several of my colleagues here talking about keeping care for elders closer to or at home, and this is, seems to me, the same project and as someone who voted to delete budget but now is putting it forward, that's why I asked: what has changed? Generally, as MLA, your goals and your thoughts are usually consistent year to year.

I'll quote from the same document speaking to the motion just to get the point across again about smaller communities. It says, "...the right [to care] that is held by every single elder in Nunavut; the right to access services that meet their needs. Use that as a foundation.

[Madam Chairperson], I'm lucky that in my home community in Arviat we do have an elders' home already. Unfortunately the other community I represent, Whale Cove, does not have an elders facility. Do I think that it's reasonable for me to demand that Whale Cove get a level 5 dementia facility? Probably not, but I do believe it's entirely reasonable for me to demand, on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of the elders I represent, clear answers on what services, programs, and facilities are available to them.

I do believe that we need to remember that if the government's current plan goes ahead, elders will still be relocated, elders will still be moved from their home communities and particularly for those who are closer to the end of their lives, it's unacceptable. We need to do everything we can..."

Chairman: Sorry; apparently, my mic wasn't on. Mr. Lightstone, what's your point of order?

Mr. Lightstone: Well, Mr. Chairman, first I would like to start off by pointing out that the questions that are being raised by the member are both irrelevant and repetitive to the line item which we are currently discussing. The member is trying to seek the minister's opinion and how his point of view has changed, and that doesn't necessarily align with the debate that we're having currently.

As I indicated, the questions being irrelevant and repetitive, I don't understand the point of these questions and if there actually is an actual reason for them. My only assumption is that the member is asking these questions with the intent of putting forward a motion to delete a line item. I would like to ask: what is the point of these questions and does the member actually have the intent to put forward a motion to delete an item? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, the member is asking for the minister's reason on why he's bringing forward this very similar request and there is no rule broken in there. As far as a motion to delete, that's an assumption at this point. Mr. Savikataaq, continue, please.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Technical stuff. There is no point of order to be found. Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, it's not a debate, but if you have a further point of order, go ahead.

Mr. Lightstone: My apologies, Mr. Chairman. I have no further comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister has heard numerous times about regular members wanting to keep their elders in facilities and in the minister's previous role, that's the MLA, MLA Main also wanted to keep elders and was against the regional facilities.

What I asked is: what has changed? Because we still don't have the strategy. It would have been nice if the strategy had been out. I know that we need elder care facilities. We do and this is one option, but I'll move on from there, I guess, because the minister stated that it's in the mandate and that's why the minister is pushing it forward. It probably was in the mandate last government too, but I'm not going to go there. As for the assumption of Member Lightstone, he can make that assumption.

I would just like to wrap up the concept of sending elders out again. I'll quote from here because it is worth quoting and these are what the minister said in a different role. "Madam Chairperson, I'll just wrap up my comments now with a comment from an elder.

(interpretation) An elder once told me something that I have never forgotten. Since that person is quite elderly now, sometimes his childhood memories come to him because he has dementia. As their brain is diminishing, they tend to go back to their childhood mentally. I don't want elders to be looked at as children, but I have never forgotten that." I believe the minister; he hasn't forgotten it, so it should be in his mind. "I don't think we are supposed to send our children away outside of Nunavut, outside of their communities. I have never forgotten what I was told before."

Mr. Speaker, we are still going to send elders out of their communities, so I ask the minister: what plan is in place to speed up the process of getting smaller, non-regional health elder facilities for the elders that would have to be sent away? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for that good question. (interpretation ends) In terms of the need for smaller communities to have facilities, in this Assembly with this current group of MLAs, it continues to be raised as an important issue. During standing committee, it was one of the top issues that was brought up by multiple MLAs.

As I sit here now in my still pretty new role as health minister, those comments and those requests from the standing committee and the comments and requests in the Committee of the Whole, those matter to me as minister and those are things that I take away from these meetings and when I'm sitting with my staff or when I'm sitting with a federal minister, those are things that I have the ability to raise and those are the things that I have the ability to, hopefully, move forward on.

As was mentioned in response to, I believe, MLA Simailak or MLA Malliki, there are currently no definitive plans in terms of what will come after Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit are developed, but it's up to us as Members of this Assembly to debate projects, to debate the direction that we're going in. I think our direction in the short to medium term is clear. We're very focused on bringing Rankin Inlet online, getting Cambridge Bay into construction, getting Iqaluit into construction, and what happens after that? I hope that we will start to outline that vision.

As was mentioned yesterday, the senior strategy being worked on by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, it's a very important piece of work that could lead to significant gains for elders across Nunavut, not necessarily specific to long-term care, but a whole-of-government approach to the issues they face. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to report progress.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not subject to debate. All those in favour. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker once I give the witnesses their excuse from the table. Thank you.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 31 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kusugak. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for November 2:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 26
 - Bill 27
 - Bill 28
 - Bill 29
 - Bill 30
 - Bill 31
 - Bill 32
 - Bill 33

- Bill 34
- Tabled Document 1 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 120 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 163 – 6(2)
- Tabled Document 174 – 6(2)

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 22 – 6(2), the House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 2, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:33*

Appendix – November 1, 2023



Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts

***Report on the Review of the 2023 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Child and Family Services in Nunavut***

**2nd Session of the 6th Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Fall 2023 Sitting**

Chairperson

George Hickes

Co-Chairperson

Alexander Sammurtok

Members

Bobby Anavilok
Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster
Mary Killiktee
Adam Arreak Lightstone
Solomon Malliki
Karen Nutarak
Joanna Quassa
Joseph Quqqiaq
Joe Savikataaq
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Introduction

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's *2023 Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut Services* was tabled in the House on May 30, 2023.

The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the Auditor General's 2023 Report on September 19 and 20, 2023. Transcripts from the hearing are available on the Legislative Assembly's website.

Witnesses appearing before the standing committee included a number of senior officials from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and the Government of Nunavut's departments of Family Services, Health, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and Human Resources. The Standing Committee extends its appreciation to the witnesses for their contributions to the proceedings.

The Auditor General's 2023 Report follows two previous reports by the Auditor General on this same subject, one in 2011 and one in 2014.

The Auditor General of Canada's *2011 Report on Children, Youth and Family Programs in Nunavut* audited a number of areas relating to child, youth and family programs and services in Nunavut to evaluate the government's performance in carrying out its own procedures and following its own laws in these areas.

Fourteen of the twenty recommendations in the Auditor General's 2011 report addressed services relating to children and youth. The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts reviewed the report and in June of 2011 presented a report with seven recommendations for the government.

The Auditor General of Canada's *2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut – Department of Family Services* focused on compliance with the *Child and Family Services Act* and included six recommendations which echoed many of the recommendations in its 2011 report addressing staffing, training, compliance with standards, the collecting of basic information and community and parental engagement.

The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts reviewed the report and in the fall of 2014 tabled a report of its review with nine recommendations for the government to address issues raised by the Auditor General. It was noted at that time that the committee was disappointed with the lack of progress made in addressing recommendations brought forward following the 2011 audit.

In 2014, the Department of Family Services brought forward a comprehensive Action Plan to address the numerous issues raised by the Office of the Auditor General and, at the request of the committee, tabled several updates to the re-named *Quality Protects Action Plan* over the next few years indicating what progress had been achieved in each identified area.

In September of 2017, the government's final update of its *Quality Protects Action Plan* was tabled in the House, indicating each and every action item as completed. However, the necessary changes do not seem to have been effected.

The Auditor General of Canada's *2023 Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut* again focused on the provision of services to protect and support the well-being of

vulnerable children, youth and their families in accordance with legislation, policy and program requirements. The report included findings in nine key areas but contained no specific recommendations. Instead, the opening lines of lines of the report declare:

“This audit report describes a crisis. It is a call for change. We are urging the Government of Nunavut to take immediate action to protect the vulnerable children and youth of the territory.”

Historical Context

The historical context is important. More than a decade has passed since the Auditor General first addressed this topic. As noted by a witness from the Office of the Auditor General:

“Our [2023] report gave the Legislative Assembly a picture at a point in time. That picture was not very different than the picture that we gave this Legislative Assembly in 2011 and 2014, and that’s a reason for sadness.”

Standing Committee Recommendation #1:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut carefully consider all three reports of the Office of the Auditor General on its reviews of Child and Family Services in Nunavut; the full transcripts of all three Standing Committee hearings on the Auditor General’s reports; the recommendations made by the Standing Committees of the day; the government’s Quality Protects Action Plan for lessons learned; the context of current circumstances; and to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

It is critical that new approaches, new commitments and new energy be brought to address this crisis. During the Standing Committee hearing, a witness from the Department of Family Services responded:

“Perseverance, in my mind, is you don’t keep trying the same thing and expecting a different result. It means that you try different things and hopefully achieve a different result. The important part of perseverance, in my mind, as it relates to what we are discussing today is that we’re consistently trying or achieving success in implementing a response to all of these root causes as a whole-of-government.”

First Steps

It is clear to the Standing Committee that the need for change in delivering services to vulnerable children, youth and families in Nunavut is urgent and critical. The Minister of Family Services has indicated that the department is taking immediate and sustainable steps to address the findings noted in the Auditor General’s report.

As a first step, the Standing Committee welcomes the Minister's recent apology for the impacts that the government's systemic deficiencies have had on vulnerable Nunavummiut. As stated by a member of the Standing Committee:

"What we know is that healing begins with apologies and taking responsibility."

Throughout the hearing, government witnesses gave a number of assurances and made numerous commitments to address deficiencies identified by the Auditor General.

It is important that those words lead to real action and change.

Following some of the responses provided by government witnesses, a witness from the Office of the Auditor General noted:

"The aspects that [the witness] was covering relate to things that *should* happen. There isn't evidence that they were happening, and that's important... I wanted to make that clear. That as we're talking about what should happen, it's where we need to focus the lens in the future."

Although the individuals in roles of leadership and decision-making may have changed, the institution which has the legislated responsibility for safe-guarding Nunavut's children, youth and families remains. Trust in this institution has been eroded over the past decade and possibly longer, and it will take significant work to regain it. As we move forward, that trust will need to be earned.

Whole-of-Government approach

One of the key findings in the Auditor General's *2023 Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut* focuses on 'root causes'. The report notes:

"We found that the Department of Family Services' inability to meet its responsibilities to Nunavut's at-risk children and youth is linked to many intertwined root causes that have contributed to this persistent and chronic crisis."

"These interlinked root causes will need to be addressed through interdepartmental collaboration. That will require the government to oversee a whole-of-government approach."

During the course of the committee's hearing, a number of aspects relating to the root causes referred to in the Auditor General's report were discussed, including, but not limited to:

- The role of the Department of Health in ensuring adequate levels of counselling for mental health, substance abuse and youth-focused services and the role of community health staff in addressing situations of child abuse or neglect;
- The role of the Department of Human Resources in removing systemic barriers to the employment of individuals as community social services workers and family resources workers; initiatives to fill community social services worker positions; and the priority allocation of housing to such frontline personnel as community social services workers;
- the role of the Nunavut Housing Association in ensuring that staff housing units are made available for such staff as community social services workers and ongoing efforts to increase the availability of housing in Nunavut's communities to alleviate situations of overcrowding;
- the role of Nunavut Arctic College in providing training, education and certification for such programs as social work, family resource work, and mental health work;
- the role of the Department of Education in addressing situations of child abuse or neglect and the sharing of information related to the care and well-being of children at risk;
- the role of the Department of Community and Government Services in accessing adequate safe and comfortable office space for community social services workers; and
- the role of the Department of Justice in sharing information related to the abuse or violence involving children and youth.

In response to the Auditor General's report, on May 30, 2023, the Premier of Nunavut stated:

"Taking a whole-of-government approach, [the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs] EIA will provide oversight across departments for services related to the wellbeing of children, youth, and families."

Standing Committee Recommendation #2:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut provide updates to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the status and progress of every specific task(s) assigned to each department which are directly linked to the root causes which affect the provision of services related to the wellbeing of children, youth and families in Nunavut.

The standing committee further recommends that these updates be tabled on the first day of every sitting of the Legislative Assembly on an ongoing basis.

Continuous communication between departments and key stakeholders on these issues will be key to collaboratively addressing the root causes impacting the Department of Family Services' ability to meet its responsibilities to Nunavut's children, youth and families.

The Standing Committee further encourages the establishment and ongoing support of community-based interagency groups to address related issues and provide local support to both front-line staff and residents in all of Nunavut's communities.

Next Steps

In addition to undertaking a number of specific initiatives to address concerns raised by the Auditor General, the Department of Family Services has committed to implementing two critical tools to address the current crisis, its Strategic Plan and the Matrix case management software. This software will, in addition to other functions, collect data, and track and monitor the numbers and whereabouts of children and youth in care and the services being provided to them.

The Standing Committee notes that the lack of specific timelines for actions to address the commitments made by the Department of Family Services is concerning.

Standing Committee Recommendation #3:

The standing committee recommends that the Department of Family Services' Strategic Plan in response to the Auditor General's report be provided to the Standing Committee at the earliest opportunity and tabled no later than the Winter sitting of 2024.

The standing committee further recommends that the commitments established in the Department of Family Services' Strategic Plan are clear and concise, that the expected results related to each of those commitments are straight-forward and measurable, and that each commitment and its expected results have specified timelines and accountabilities for achieving those timelines.

The standing committee further recommends that a comprehensive evaluation framework be established as a component of the Strategic Plan.