



June 21, 2016

Tabled Document 246-4(3)

Feb 22/17

Hon. George Kuksuk, MLA
Minister of Languages
Office of the Minister
Legislative Assembly Precinct
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

George

Dear ~~Minister Kuksuk~~:

Further to my correspondence to you and Ministers Ell-Kanayuk, Hickers and Savikataaq concerning the Government of Nunavut's contracts for medical and duty travel on scheduled airlines, I wish to take this opportunity to write to you directly concerning the status of our territory's official languages legislation.

As you are aware, sections 3-5 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, which address the duties and responsibilities of organizations, including private sector bodies operating in Nunavut, to provide Inuit Language services to our residents, are not yet in force. Section 4 of the statute provides that:

Government contracts

4. (1) Every contract issued or made by or on behalf of a department of the Government of Nunavut or a public agency, whether as a result of a request for proposals, tender or otherwise, shall require the third party communications with and services to the public in the Inuit Language that are necessary to ensure compliance with section 3.

As you are also aware, sections 9-10 of the legislation have also not yet been brought into force. Subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act*, which addresses the duties of administrative heads of the Government of Nunavut in relation to the provision of services to the public through contracts with third parties, has also not yet been brought into force.

It is essential that these provisions be brought into force, so as to ensure that organizations operating in Nunavut do so under clear legal requirements concerning the provision of Inuit Language services, and that these requirements be rigorously enforced.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of February 26, 2015, you tabled the Government of Nunavut's formal *Response to the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts' Report on the Review of the 2012-2013 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut*.

Your response stated that:

“The Government of Nunavut is committed to preparing for the coming into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act* and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. While many departments and public agencies have already made the necessary modifications to their operations in order to fulfill their obligations under these provisions, work is underway to ensure all departments and public agencies are operating in accordance with these sections.

The *Inuit Language Protection Act*, sections 3 to 5, address] Inuit Language Services and Use. Significantly, the *Uqausivut Plan* committed that these provisions will come into force within three years of the adoption of the *Uqausivut Plan*, or in other words, no later than the end of 2015-16. With this timeline as its guide, the Department of Culture and Heritage has prepared a draft document on Communications and Services and is currently engaging in discussions with Government of Nunavut Departments that have key roles to play in the implementation of Nunavut’s language legislation, namely, the Departments of Education, Community and Government Services, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development and Transportation. As stated, the aim is to have the document in place by March 31, 2015. Once this document is active, the Government will be in a position to recommend that these provisions come into force on April 1, 2016.”

I ask that you clarify, in detail, the reasons for why the government has not met its target date of April 1, 2016, for the bringing into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act* and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. I also ask that you clarify, in detail, the government’s new timetable for accomplishing this objective.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Okalik, MLA
Iqaluit-Sinaa

c.c. Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
President, Kivalliq Inuit Association
President, Kitikmeot Inuit Association



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 Building *Nunavut* Together
Nunavut Innatigutungniq
 Bâtit le *Nunavut* ensemble

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 Minister of Languages
 Ministanguyuq Uqauhinginnun
 Ministre des Langues

Paul Okalik, MLA
 Iqaluit – Sinaa
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Dear Mr. Okalik,

Thank you for your letter dated June 21st, 2016 where you sought clarifications regarding the coming into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act* and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, and what are the government's new timelines.

I agree with you that, once in force, these provisions will ensure that all organizations operating in Nunavut will do so under clear legal requirements to ensure language services are provided consistently to the general public, including third-party communications and services delivered to the public through government contracts.

The implementation of these provisions requires careful considerations. The Office of the Languages Commissioner assessed the readiness of businesses in meeting the requirements of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*¹. It was found that while businesses surveyed generally provide their reception services, signage, advertising and posters in Inuktitut, few have their brochures or websites in Inuktitut, few have prepared a language plan, and most require more information about their specific obligations. On average, businesses estimated that it would take them about 1.8 year to be compliant with the Act.

Taking stock of these findings, the Department of Economic Development and Transportations awarded a contribution to the Nunavut Economic Development Association to improve communications and training on the requirements of the language legislation. This resulted in the development of the *Handbook: How to Comply with Nunavut's Language Acts*, and the delivery of workshops in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to train community Economic Development Officers, who are often the main contact person for local businesses. These professionals are now better informed and have the tools to assist their community members to ensure a smoother and more successful implementation across the territory.

¹ Languages Commissioner's 2013-14 Annual Report.

Since 2013-14, the Department of Economic Development and Transportations has also made funding available to small businesses to help them improve compliance with their Inuit language obligations, however, there has been minimal requests for it to date. As we start working on the next Uqausivut Language Plan, we will review this program and how to make it more effective.

In consultation with my colleagues, I am committed to prepare for the coming into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act* and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act* by the end of the current fiscal year.

If you have further questions or need for clarification, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,


George Kuksuk
Minister of Languages

cc. Minister of Community and Government Services
Minister of Economic, Development & Transportation
Minister of Education
Members of the Legislative Assembly
President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
President, Kivalliq Inuit Association
President, Kitikmeot Inuit Association



Tabling of Documents

Paul Okalik, MLA

Iqaluit-Sinaa

February 22, 2017

Correspondence Regarding the Territory's Language Legislation

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table today copies of correspondence that I have sent to and received from the Minister of Languages concerning the territory's language legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this correspondence relates to those sections of the *Inuit Language Protection Act* and the *Official Languages Act* which have not yet come into force. I will have questions on this issue during our current winter sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.