

NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Corrections:

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister Responsible for Mines; Minister Responsible for Nunavut Business Credit Corporation; Minister Responsible for Nunavut Development Corporation; Minister Responsible for Trade; Minister responsible for Human Rights Tribunal; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister Responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council; Minister responsible for Seniors

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister of Human Resources; Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanase

(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services

Joelie Kaernek

(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee

(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Board; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Commission; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister Responsible for Poverty Reduction; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Karen Nutarak

(Iununiq)

Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Environment; Minister responsible for Energy; Minister responsible for Languages

Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Alexander Sammurtok

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Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	1
Ministers' Statements.....	1
Members' Statements.....	7
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	8
Oral Questions.....	11
Written Questions.....	37
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	38
Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters	38
Tabling of Documents	40
Notices of Motions	41
Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills.....	41
Second Reading of Bills	41

A.

Daily References

Friday, October 25, 2024.....	1
-------------------------------	---

B.

Ministers' Statements

472 – 6(2): Minister Absent from the House (Joanasie).....	1
473 – 6(2): Nunavut Corrections Training (Akeeagok).....	2
474 – 6(2): Canadian Patient Safety Week (Main).....	2
475 – 6(2): Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan (Nakashuk)	3
476 – 6(2): Status of Compensation Review (Gross)	4
477 – 6(2): Nunavut Search and Rescue Roundtable 2024 (Joanasie).....	5
478 – 6(2): 2024 Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship Recipients (Akeeagok D)	6

C.

Members' Statements

648 – 6(2): Appreciation of Efforts to Search for Granddaughter (Savikataaq)	7
649 – 6(2): The Need for a New School in Sanirajak (Kaermerk).....	7
650 – 6(2): Baker Lake High School Graduates (Simailak)	8

D.

Oral Questions

940 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Employee Medical Travel Guidelines (Nutarak)	11
941 – 6(2): Response to Written Question on Ministerial Travel (Savikataaq)	13
942 – 6(2): Elder Vans for Communities (Quassa)	15
943 – 6(2): Nunavut Elders Strategy Commitments (Simailak)	17
944 – 6(2): Transportation for Patients (Killiktee)	18
945 – 6(2): Human Resources Policies (Lightstone)	21
946 – 6(2): Caribou Management in the Kitikmeot (Anavilok)	23
947 – 6(2): Nunavut Development Corporation (Malliki)	25
948 – 6(2): Nunavut Household Allowance for Staff (Hickes)	27
949 – 6(2): Chesterfield Inlet Power Plant (Sammurtok)	29
950 – 6(2): Intergovernmental Relations (Brewster)	32
951 – 6(2): Street Lighting (Quqqiaq)	35

E.

Written Questions

Question 010 – 6(2): Public and Staff Housing Construction (Savikataaq)	37
---	----

F.

Tabling of Documents

306 – 6(2): Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan 2023-2028 (Nakashuk)	40
307 – 6(2): Resolutions Passed at the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (Quqqiaq)	40
306 – 6(2): Hamlet of Sanirajak Motion on Emergency Measures Services (Kaernerik)	40

G.

Notices of Motions

40 – 6(2): Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act - Rescinded	41
--	----

H.

Bills

Bill 60 – An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act – First Reading	41
Bill 50 – Fuel Tax Act – Second Reading	41
Bill 51 – Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act – Second Reading.....	42
Bill 52 – An Act to Amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act – Second Reading	42
Bill 56 – Write-Off of Assets and Debts Act, 2023-2024 – Second Reading.....	43
Bill 58 – An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act – Second Reading	43
Bill 64 – Post-Secondary Support Act – Second Reading.....	44
Bill 65 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Second Reading	44

Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, October 28, 2024

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, Mr. Joeline Kaernerck, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:31*

Speaker (Mr. Tony Akeoak) (interpretation): Good afternoon. Mr. Anavilok, can you please lead us in prayer.

Item 1: Opening Prayer

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon, people. (interpretation ends) Hello, everyone. Welcome back to Mr. Savikataaq. (interpretation) All the people watching on the radio, please feel welcome.

Ministers' Statements. Our Government House leader, Mr. Joanasie.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 472 – 6(2): Minister Absent from the House

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, good afternoon members and Nunavummiut. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that I will be absent from the House on Tuesday, October 29, as well as Wednesday, October 30 due to family reasons.

In my absence, Mr. Speaker, my colleague Hon. David Akeeagok will be acting as Government House Leader and Minister of Government and Community Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 473 – 6(2): Nunavut Corrections Training

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to share with this House the ongoing success of Nunavut Corrections' training and recruitment efforts. The Corrections Qaujimalaaqtut Training Program, which was launched in September 2021, offers a seven-week course where participants are paid to learn essential skills and processes to help them begin a successful career in corrections. More than 150 recruits have been hired through the program since its creation.

I am also pleased to report that the current cohort of participants, who started in September and will finish in December, including 24 participants whom 14 are Nunavut Inuit. This is the highest number of Nunavut Inuit in a single cohort that the program has to date.

The average number of program participants steadily increased since the new recruitment strategies were introduced this year.

Also, training now includes an introduction to the Inuit Cultural Skills Program. All participants learn about the importance and the purpose of the program, and become familiar with the equipment used for on-the-land program trips, traditional skills, and how Inuit cultural knowledge is shared.

The success of the Corrections Qaujimalaaqtut Training Program helps our correctional facilities by reducing pressures on staffing levels. It also ensures that new recruits receive high-quality training, which improves our institutions and gives staff the best chance of success.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all correctional staff. They play an important role in maintaining our safety and security. I encourage Nunavummiut who are interested in a rewarding career in public safety to contact Nunavut Corrections to learn more about training and employment opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Minister's Statement 474 – 6(2): Canadian Patient Safety Week

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

Mr. Speaker, this is Canadian Patient Safety Week. It is an annual celebration to raise awareness about patient safety issues and also highlight the role everyone plays in ensuring the well-being of patients in the healthcare system.

This week is a time for community members and healthcare providers to come together around why safety is so important to patients when seeking medical help and for healthcare staff in providing safe and effective care.

This year's theme is "Rethinking Patient Safety", and highlights that healthcare harm can come in physical, psychological, cultural or spiritual forms, and to significantly improve patient safety, we must rethink our understanding of healthcare harm. Safe care involves forming partnerships where clients actively participate in their care, and where staff create safe spaces to talk with clients, their families, and colleagues.

There are two things Nunavummiut can do that can have a positive impact on their healthcare experience: one, regularly ask questions and share concerns during your visits to health facilities and be part of decisions about your health; and two, share your experiences about health care with the Office of Patient Relations. The Office of Patient Relations is a confidential space for you and your family to discuss your experiences with the healthcare system.

Improving patient safety includes actions from healthcare staff as well, and they can encourage open dialogue between patients and healthcare providers; involve patients and their families in care planning and decision-making, and ask them what they need to make them feel safe; provide culturally safe care to patients; and maintain an incident reporting system that allows reporting of all types of safety concerns.

During this important week, Community Health Centres will be hosting events to raise awareness and celebrate this annual campaign. Let's all come together during Canadian Patient Safety Week to rethink patient safety and make healthcare safer for all Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister's Statement 475 – 6(2): Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to my colleagues, and everyone in Nunavut, I say good day.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will table the 2023-2028 Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan. The action plan is a response to the Auditor General of Canada's audit of Child and Family Services in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the action plan builds upon the foundation laid by a Family Wellness Strategic Framework that was developed in 2023, and represents our government commitment to make significant and necessary exchanges to Child and Family Services within our communities.

Ilagiitsiarniq outlines specific objectives and clear actions with timelines that the Department of Family Services is committed to implementing. A comprehensive evaluation and monitoring plan is in development to ensure commitments are implemented. Successfully achieving these goals means continuous collaboration with our communities, Inuit organizations, and other government departments.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my government colleagues, Nunavut Tunngavik, and the Representative for Children and Youth for their support while this work was undertaken. I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to Nunavummiut who participated in the consultations and shared their feedback. Your voices were heard, and your contributions were instrumental in shaping this plan.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Gross.

Minister's Statement 476 – 6(2): Status of Compensation Review

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to our colleagues and those here in the House with us today, and those across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for the public service, I am proud to highlight steps taken by the Department of Human Resources to improve employee engagement and to support the Government of Nunavut as an Employer of Choice.

Mr. Speaker, in the Spring of 2023, our colleague Minister Akeeagok announced in the fall of 2023, the Department of Human Resources embarked on a comprehensive review of the Government of Nunavut's compensation structure which resulted in our colleague, Minister Akeeagok Spring announcement of a significant salary increase of 9-11% for many employees that went into effect on September 30, 2024. I hope our public servants noticed this increase in last Friday's pay cheque.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight some additional work and advancements taking place as part of this strategic initiative.

A salary review is underway for a critical component of Nunavut's workforce - our teachers, vice principals, and principals - who are employees under the Nunavut Teachers Association collective agreement.

We expect recommendations from this independent review to be delivered by the end of this year.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the final phase of the compensation review has begun, which will recommend additional actions that the Government of Nunavut can take to attract and retain new talent in the public service. This work includes an assessment of the Government of Nunavut's total rewards system, including employee benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Human Resources' compensation review, coupled with the Government of Nunavut Employee Engagement Survey, demonstrate my department's commitment to supporting our public service and their ongoing work to build a stronger and more resilient Nunavut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 477 – 6(2): Nunavut Search and Rescue Roundtable 2024

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the members of this House regarding planned search and rescue activities taking place in the coming weeks in Iqaluit, between November 14 and 17, 2024.

Mr. Speaker, on November 14, my department will host the initial meeting of a new Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) forum for Nunavut. The purpose of this forum is to bring together key organizational partners in community safety to promote collaboration, relationship building, information and knowledge sharing, as well as interoperability between all entities involved in search and rescue operations in Nunavut. This forum provides all partners with an opportunity to develop recommendations, advice, and provide suggestions, through consensus, to the department on all aspects of search and rescue in Nunavut.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, from November 15 to 17 the department will work with our academic partners to host the 2024 Nunavut Search and Rescue Roundtable. This

roundtable will bring Nunavut's 25 community search and rescue coordinators together to learn from one another, to train, and to strengthen relationships with territorial, federal, non-governmental, and private-sectors partners.

Bringing our lead Ground Search and Rescue Coordinators together through this roundtable aims to facilitate conversations around ground search and rescue, including current realities for our volunteer organizations, and how the systems can be improved to better support this critical function.

Mr. Speaker, my department has been actively engaging our search and rescue partners to determine how best to support our communities through this critical public safety function. By bringing people together in the spirit of Qanuqtuurniq and Pakistani, we will look at innovative approaches to advance this important work and protect and serve Nunavummiut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to all the search and rescue workers in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 478 – 6(2): 2024 Sumata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship Recipients

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation is dedicated to enhancing Nunavut's aviation workforce through the Sumata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship. This scholarship empowers Nunavut students pursuing aviation-based programs with grants, aligning with the Inuit Employment Plan to boost the representation of Inuit aviation specialists in the transportation sector.

For 2024-25, the program's budget surged from \$30,000 to \$105,000. I am thrilled to announce that the selection committee has chosen seven outstanding Nunavummiut actively engaged in their aviation studies as recipients of this year's scholarship.

Together we celebrate the remarkable scholarship awardees: Edward Mosher Kairis, Nalliah Iyerak, Elaine Sanertanut, Sidney Nichol, Julia Kotierk, Nangmalik Qanatsiaq, and Teena Kacee.

I might not have said their names properly, but each will receive a \$7,500 scholarship to support their aviation education.

Join me in honouring these bright minds and the future they hold in the aviation industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 648 – 6(2): Appreciation of Efforts to Search for Granddaughter

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Nunavummiut. I'm late but I am here. I will try and be clear. I want to thank Arviarmmiut. I had lost my granddaughter and they made a search by boat, plane, Honda, wading in the water. They did a major search. I also would like to thank Arviarmmiut. My grandchild is not around. Thank you.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerker.

Member's Statement 649 – 6(2): The Need for a New School in Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Amittummiut, fellow members. Today I stand. One my constituents Sanirajak. I would like to look at the issue of education, where education and those that graduate and those entering education system.

It affects capital projects, schools, the school in Sanirajak, Hall Beach, Sanirajak, is old. Mr. Speaker before Nunavut that school was built, and it is now not adequate, too small, lots of students. And Mr. Speaker, for the higher grades to grade 10, 11 and 12, they are in one classroom and it becomes too small. And the lower grades also. It affects their attendance.

We know education is a priority in Nunavut. The Minister recently, 2023-2024, highest number of graduates graduating. Also from my constituents I want to see more education being pursued in post-secondary education, or even to Arctic College.

We are aware that some students don't finish school before they're done, and at times they want to return back to school. One of my concerns for my constituents and that we honour our youth and as parents.

At the appropriate time I will ask the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 3, Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 3. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Member's Statement 650 – 6(2): Baker Lake High School Graduates

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You did see me raise my hand. Mr. Speaker, for Baker Lake graduates, I'm happy for their parents and their grandparents. On August 23 there were many that graduated in Baker Lake:

Wilbur Cook, Gavin Dunn, Niego Killulark, Daniel Kingungkotok, Caterina Makayak, Sheridan Mannik, Aidan Nagyogalik, Christina Papatsie, Jenna Pudnak, Laura Pupik-Hughson, Trixie Qarkliksaq, Daniel Tapatai, Aranxa Tunguaq, Allison Tupik, and Terrianna Uqayuittuq were the graduates in Baker Lake. We hope you have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member from Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We feel for you, Mr. Savikataaq.

(interpretation ends) Laurel McCorriston is the outgoing executive director of the Uquuqtaq Society, and Mr. Kevin Eaton, the incoming executive director of Uquuqtaq Society.

>>Applause

During her six years leading the organization, Ms. McCorriston made significant contributions to the City of Iqaluit, developing several different homelessness programs and services for men and women.

Mr. Eaton comes from British Columbia, where he worked with the urban Indigenous homeless population for 15 years and as a member of the Ahousaht First Nation. Mr. Eaton began his career on the front line before moving on to senior management and executive leadership roles. He brings significant experience in program and capital development, and is honoured and excited to serve Inuit in Iqaluit.

Ms. McCorriston, we will miss you in our community and we wish you well in your future endeavours. Mr. Eaton, you have big shoes to fill, but we are confident that you will serve Iqaluit citizens well.

Please join me in thanking Ms. McCorriston and welcoming Mr. Eaton to the House.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: And welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fellow members, I rise to recognize, I think I have recognized once again to be here in the House and has been an MLA and a minister. I am grateful that I hear and speak about the work that we do. Becky Mike, welcome her to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: And welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do feel for our fellow member.

I would like to recognize one of the students here to Iqaluit. I want Harrison Willy (ph) from Arctic Bay, and beside her, another Akeeagok, Christie Akeeagok. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of my constituents student, Mona Neilson (ph), glad to see her in the House. Also Makee, who used to be my teacher. Very fun to be in her classroom. And the translator in the nursing program. She was one of my instructors and I'm impressed with the quality of her teaching. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I too would like to send my condolences to the community of Arviat and to the family of Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by of course recognizing my elder, Becky Mike. I've known her since probably before I could walk, and its always nice to see her here. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Speaker, as many people know, I was chair of the Uquuqtaq Society many years ago. Laurel McCorriston joined after I left that work. However, I was lucky enough to be in close contact with her on a regular basis about the issues that she is dealing with, and I know that she made a great sacrifice to move to Iqaluit and stay here for so long.

I wish you the best every luck in reuniting to your family and being closer to home, Laurel. Thank you for your service.

Welcome, Mr. Eaton. I look forward to meeting with you as well, and I hope that you enjoy your time in Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, I have two friends in the House, my former colleague. Christie Akeeagok worked at Health and we had a lot of fun working together. Both she and my friend Elisapee Avingnak (ph) have made the decision to take a step aside in their current careers to take the interpreter-translator program.

And Elisapee is not only my friend, she's my frequent collaborator in art, and I wish both of them the best of luck in their studies, and all of the students who are working towards becoming interpreter-translators because it's such important work. I hope that you enjoy your time here in the House. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we love you, colleague.

I recognize a visitor from Arviat, Ms. Icariq. She's here visiting the Assembly. It's always great to see Arviat residents coming here. Welcome to the Assembly, and welcome all the students. And the interpreters are very valuable in our work, and I hope you continue education positively. Welcome.

Speaker: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I don't often much recognize visitors. I would like to welcome my former, Chris Akeeagok, who now resides here in Iqaluit. I did hear her name mentioned earlier, but even if you were recognized, welcome to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. David Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My condolences, Mr. Savikataaq and family.

Mr. Speaker, a Sanikiluaq student is also here and I would like to acknowledge and recognize my brother Lucassie Sala. It's always great to see Sanikiluaq residents here. We live quite a distance away, on the islands. I'm very proud she's here and hopefully we will welcome her and have her continue on being interpreter-translator.

Speaker: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 940 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Employee Medical Travel Guidelines

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me first. I wasn't able to ask my questions on Friday. And good afternoon to Pond Inlet residents.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, my questions today concern the subject of the Government of Nunavut's employee medical travel guidelines, which fall under the responsibility of the Department of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have approached me with concerns about the ability of employees to apply for accountable travel advances before leaving the community for medical travel. As the Minister will appreciate, many government employees living in the smaller communities are Inuit, and they often support a number of family members with just one pay cheque. In some cases they simply cannot pay for meals and other expenses until such time as they can submit a claim for reimbursement.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has been raised a number of times in the Legislative Assembly. When my colleague from Uqummiut raised it during the spring sitting 2022, the Minister of Health stated in the House that "if an employee is unable to cover the expenses they will be than incurring on the ground, such as meals and transport, they are able to request a travel advance in advance of their travel."

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have told me that their application for advances were denied, or were told that there is no such thing.

For the record, can the Minister of Finance clarify the government's policy in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Before I go to the minister, I just wanted to let everyone know that the last two sittings we ran out of time for questions and answers, and when everyone is here I would ask everyone to keep their questions short and to the point, as well as the ministers answering the questions. Please make them short. We want everyone to ask their questions. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My condolences also to the Savikataaq family.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing in the policy that states that medical travel advances are not allowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister. When these arise here in the Assembly, we are not realized to an employee. They should be in advance because they don't always know.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, his department's the most recent business plan indicates that one of its priorities have been to "develop an employee survey for medical travel to guide improvements and program delivery."

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work, and can he indicate what specific improvements are being actively considered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the line of questioning I am receiving on this. Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to make improvements to the medical travel policy. There are many factors that are in that policy,

and there were issues within it. I'll use a couple of examples, one of which was there was very limited time in terms of when individuals were able to go on medical travel and then had to return on the next available flight.

Mr. Speaker, there was interest from medical travel patients that they would like to stay longer, under their own coin, under their own time, and we have made the changes to enable GN employees to add up to seven days of personal travel before or after their medical travel. For an example, we have made those changes. It has been a very positive change in that front.

Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to ask that the changes become available, and of course I'll share them with this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister (interpretation ends) for the commitment.

As the Minister is aware, of the Government of Nunavut employees' medical travel guidelines, that are publicly available, indicate that they were last updated in June of 2017, over half a decade ago. Can the Minister confirm when the updated employee medical travel guideline will be published? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't give a specific date but I could give a timeline that we're hopeful that they will be done within this fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 941 – 6(2): Response to Written Question on Ministerial Travel

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the premier on my written question from May 31, 2024 pertaining to duty travel and home travel. Mr. Speaker, I'm not questioning the ministers' ability to duty travel or home travel whatever he or she, the minister wants; this is about the accuracy of the written response.

Mr. Speaker, three of the out-of-town ministers were not here when we were here April 17, to 24 for Standing Committee, and according to the response they were not on duty

travel and they were not on home travel, so they should have been here. I would like to question the premier on the accuracy of the response that I received. Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague. My thoughts are with you and knowing Arviat is going through difficulties.

I would like to thank the written questions that came in and the details that we reviewed at our office. We had factual responses, and the details from the April 17 is something I will have to look further as to what culminated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the reason why us out-of-town MLAs, we come into Iqaluit for Standing Committee sitting, and sometimes we want or need to speak with ministers and it is very useful and handy when the ministers are in town when we're in town. It was sad during our time April 17 to 24, three of the out-of-town ministers were not here. We never saw them in the building. So that's why I wanted to ask about the accuracy of the reply to the written statement, because normally if you're not on duty travel and you're not on home travel then, if you do the math they are probably here in Iqaluit if you're and out-of-town minister.

So will the premier commit to -- I won't say the names of the ministers that were not here on TV here, but I can give them the names and see if they were here in town from April 17 to 24. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree that this is very important, that when we meet here that the ministers be available as concerns are always raised here in the House. I agree with him, Mr. Speaker, and I will want to look further on the days, how and what took place, and I expect that I will be able to relay this further with my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear an actual commitment. Will the premier commit to getting back to me, not in this House, but when I give him the names

of the three out-of-town ministers that were not here, to confirm whether they were here in Iqaluit at that time or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did say yes, I will look forward to responding to my colleague and relay to him and the questions as to what took place. After the meeting I will correspond with the MLA.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Question 942 – 6(2): Elder Vans for Communities

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my thoughts to my colleague and family.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the premier and Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Speaker, in the spring the premier announced that five elder vans would be purchased for communities that needed elder transportation. A recent press release announced which communities would be receiving those vans.

Can the premier clearly explain what specific criteria were used to select which communities would be receiving elder vans this summer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank my colleague for raising this issue. I was very pleased that the vans that will be used for elders in the community. These were urgent, as we were told, and we worked on them since. Just recently, over a week ago, we were able to identify the five communities as we look for which community would receive, in view of annual, but the most important was whether the cargo ships are able to make it to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the premier for clarifying the matter.

(interpretation ends) Last week, on October 24, in response to a related question posed by my colleague from Baker Lake, the premier stated that they selected the one applicant who could deliver five elder vans to five communities. Can the premier clarify whether the contract to that one entity to deliver elder vans to the five selected communities also included the employment and housing of the drivers of these vans, as well as a garage that would be the place for the van? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague for asking about that very important matter. We first asked who would be interested in getting the contract, and a contractor was chosen. And the purchase and shipping on ship was based on financing available to deliver these five vans to the communities for elder use. The contractor will be looking at the operations of the vans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the premier.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my colleagues from Baker Lake and Uqqummiut have both expressed the urgent need for elder transportation in their communities. The premier has indicated at different times that the communities of Kugaaruk, Arviat, and Taloyoak have expressed interest in having elder vans.

I would like to state for the record that the community of Igloolik is also very interested in getting an elder van to provide transportation for our elders.

Can the premier provide a clear, detailed explanation of how Igloolik can be included in the list of communities selected to receive an elders van? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague. I completely agree with my colleague. We looked at all the communities and we based our decision on the sea lift. We heard from the community and we were only going to start off with the first five communities, and then we'll see how that runs. And then we wanted to go on to the other communities. Igloolik is obviously a part, is one of the communities that needs it for the elders, so we will see how the first shipment goes and then we can look more into the future about the other ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 943 – 6(2): Nunavut Elders Strategy Commitments

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the premier as well. And it's continuing on from my line of questions last week on the elder care vans.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the premier about the government's progress on meeting the 89 commitments made in its Nunavut Elders and Seniors Strategy. More specifically, I asked about the elders vans that are being provided to five communities.

Can the premier provide further detail on how much it is costing the government to purchase and ship elders vans to the five communities that were selected by his committee of senior officials? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Minister Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for asking that question. It's approximately \$175,000 for the purchase but also the delivery of each van to those fine communities as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue on October 24, I was referring to the government's commitment which is spelled out on page 35 of the Nunavut Elders and Seniors Strategy, and it states:

"The Government of Nunavut is committed to ensuring elders are provided with safe transportation. To support this commitment we will ensure that a wheelchair-accessible elders bus with drivers is available in every community."

However, on October 24, the premier stated that purchasing the five elder vans was a pilot project to demonstrate a need that has been identified by elders.

Can the premier clarify whether the government intends to meet this commitment, and if not, can he tell us how many of the other 88 commitments made in the strategy are now being adjusted to become pilot projects to determine a need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I want to thank my colleague for very important questions. Mr. Speaker, I had indicated in that discussion we first had that the commitments and the tabling of the strategy that was done in the spring, but also just most recently, we just passed the implementation strategy that tackles specifically the action items that are identified in the strategy.

I very much look forward to working with my colleagues here from each department to fulfill all the commitments. There has been much progress from the time we tabled the strategy to where we are today, and I very much look forward to seeing each and every item implemented as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. Mr. Speaker, the premier stated the purchase of the vans was \$175,000 plus freight. While it is still not clear to me why a community such as Iqaluit would need another wheelchair-accessible bus when they are already a number of them on the ground, I recognize that the government wanted to mobilize quickly to get the vans on the sea lift ships that had space available this summer.

Will the premier clarify from which specific budget line these vans were paid for, and tell us whether any projects or programs within that same budgets have been delayed or deferred due to the allocation of funds to purchase these elder vans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. We spent funds from our budgets to buy those vehicles at an emergency basis, and up to now we can expect five vehicles. But as to where the money came from, they came from EIA budget that were unused. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 944 – 6(2): Transportation for Patients

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say good day to the people of Nunavut and everyone here. Yes, it has been becoming obvious or understandable, it looks like. We were planning to ask the same question, but we did not.

I rise to ask for help on behalf of the Uqqummiut riding. In the Minister's announcement, I felt better after hearing it, thinking about my constituents, thinking about what the

premier was saying at the beginning. I was talking about needing a vehicle that can take patients to the hospital.

To the Minister of Health, up to today we've had big problems because there are no vehicles available for the people that have to go to the hospital, and also that have to go to medical travel, or if they get asked to come in by the doctor. People that need to go see the doctor and people with handicaps, that really affects them. When they don't have any other vehicle or anybody to take them to the hospital or to the airport.

I would like to ask the Minister: Do you know about this issue? Do you know about this hardship that people go through who have to go to the hospital among my constituents of Uqummiut? They have no way to get to the hospital, in terms of getting a ride. Have you heard that concern, first of all? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of my colleague's question, yes, I have heard about the issue and how it is a problem, and a blockage, I have heard of that and thinking about people with disabilities or elders. Yeah, we really want to support them.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health has been advocating for additional resources in terms of in-community ground transportation for a number of years. In fact, as far back as 2009 the Department of Health put forward a request to Indigenous Services Canada and that was denied at the time. But we fully understand the need for ground transportation at the community level, and with the new benefit that has been announced as of 2023, that all medical travellers are eligible for a taxi ride to and from the airport, or for ground transportation, I think that's an opportunity and hopefully something that will lead to better services and supports for Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good to hear. However, when you're in the community, there are communities with no taxi service, and I represent the communities, two communities that have no taxis. There has been many patients that had to go to the hospital with real problems with non-available services in terms of transportation to the hospital. There is absolutely nothing available in the communities.

It's especially hard for our elders who have disabilities and other people with disabilities.

The Department of Health, it would be really good if the department could look at providing more services in our communities, for our constituents. They really need to have proper services available for them, and many of the airports are not close to the communities and people don't have a way to get to the hospital or to the airport.

While that's the case, can the Minister explain to us if there is any way of considering more services by the health department to the communities?

We need a service taking elders and handicapped people to the hospitals or health centres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the questions. (interpretation ends) When it comes to, there are a few different things. I'll try to respond as quickly as possible.

When it comes to emergency transportation to and from the airport, that's a service that is provided in many communities in Nunavut. It's funded by Indigenous Services Canada, and so it's called, usually referred to as a stretcher service. In the last couple years there are more and more communities in Nunavut that are coming on line. I think Baker Lake is one of the most recent is examples.

In terms of in-community ground transportation, there are currently no resources behind that. Nobody, Indigenous Services Canada will not fund that. The Department of Health currently doesn't have the allocated budget for that.

If that is what the member is referring to, that would be something that would have to be put forward through the budget planning process, if it was to become a service for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your response. The requirement to work together with various departments where we lack financial resources, but in terms of planning discussion in the House, the ground transportation in communities is inadequate. We have raised this issue as a priority for my constituents. As the Minister of Health, can you provide us support for Uqqummiut in Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River to support in our community's leadership for elder transportation as an item that we require? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we require items in our constituencies, Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River or other communities across Nunavut that require new capital items, I support all the proposals. And if I understand the question, as myself and whether I would support with the premier and I guess I could look at writing a proposal and supporting all the communities requirements for elder vehicles for the Department of Health, I support this as all the communities. I agree. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 945 – 6(2): Human Resources Policies

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources and they concern the implementation and administration of the Government of Nunavut's hiring policies.

Mr. Speaker, its clear that the government's vacancy crisis continues and the most recent quarterly employment report indicates again close to 2,000 Government of Nunavut positions remain vacant. Over the past year two new policies have been introduced to help address the vacancy crisis and fill positions in a more expeditious manner, the Remote Hiring Policy and the Nunavut-Wide Hiring Policy.

Mr. Speaker, information published by the Department of Human Resources indicates that approximately 60 Government of Nunavut positions were approved by cabinet in October, 2023 to be filled through the new Remote Hiring Policy. I would like to ask can the Minister confirm how many of these position have actually been filled by remote workers, and can the Minister commit to including this information in all future public service annual reports? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question on the new Remote Hire Policy. We have currently one person that is hired under that policy. We have, as the member stated, 63 positions that have been approved for remote hire, and we have 18 active competitions under the remote hire policy at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the Minister on her notes in her briefing binder. I didn't have an opportunity to give the member a heads-up on this topic, so that's impressive.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, I have been constantly pointing out the need for a modern, a flexible approach to human resource management in the government and I will continue to advocate for such initiatives as a four-day work week pilot project.

In June of this year the Government of Nunavut's telework policy came into effect. The policy indicates that the Government of Nunavut is "committed to providing high quality, uninterrupted government services to Nunavummiut, while providing employees with the flexibility when practicable and appropriate to provide those services in a safe work environment outside of the Government of Nunavut's designated work spaces."

Again I would like to commend the government for moving in the same direction as the broader private and public sector and being becoming more flexible, and becoming more attractive to potential employees.

I would like to ask the Minister to update the House and indicate how many applications under this new policy have been approved to date, and in addition, how many Government of Nunavut employees have expressed intent to apply for this new remote policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. In June 2024, we had approval of the telework policy and we have short-term requests for three to six weeks, as well as long-term requests up to six months. For the three to six weeks, with the deputy minister's approval we've had 151 requests, 119 employees on average. Average days approved were ten to 13 days. And on long-term, we've had at the DM committee there were four requests. Three were denied and one was approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm very impressed by the Minister's level of detail. This is very, very great to see.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to providing high-quality, uninterrupted government services, I had raised a number of initiatives such as creating a more flexible workplace but I also introduced the concept of a non-financial benefit such as a four-day work week to help alleviate our hiring recruitment crisis. At the time I did get the previous Minister of Human Resources to commit to including this potential four-day work-week pilot in the upcoming human resource strategy.

I would like to ask the Minister, the new Minister of Human Resources, for an update on the implementation of the concept of a four-day work-week in the upcoming human resources strategy of the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. It is definitely something that I've talked about with the department, but I can't report anything at this point to the members. But when we do, I'll make sure that we share that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I would just like to add, be mindful of your colleagues. Oral questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 946 – 6(2): Caribou Management in the Kitikmeot

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off I just want to express my condolences to the Arviat. I too this last spring had a missing family member and was never found.

Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Environment, and they concern the important issue of caribou management in the Kitikmeot. Mr. Speaker, in April of this year the minister's department issued a public service announcement concerning the closure of the Dolphin-Union harvest in Kugluktuk. The department's announcement indicated that the communities' total allowable harvest of 105 caribou was "established to support the recovery of the Dolphin-Union caribou population, and is a critical piece of the co-management efforts to allow the herd to recover and provide harvesting opportunities for future generations."

Can the Minister provide an update today on the status of his department's help with co-management partners to support the Dolphin-Union caribou population. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member for the great question. Mr. Speaker, my department also completed a population survey for the Dolphin-Union caribou herd that took place in October and November, 2023. Analysis are currently underway and a final report will be provided to co-management partners when it becomes available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) On May 3 of this year the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board issued its decision concerning the request by the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization to increase the total allowable harvest of Blue Nose East caribou from 170 to 450, and to remove the non-quota limitation requiring that the level of female harvest be less than or equal to 50 percent of the total allowable harvest.

On May 28, 2024 the Minister formally accepted the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decision to approve the request.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the hard work of the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization. Can the Minister clearly explain what the next regulatory steps will be over the next two years, concerning management of this caribou population. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member, for the good question. Mr. Speaker, it's very encouraging to see the Blue Nose East caribou herd population has increased, doubled in size actually, Mr. Speaker. The last survey was conducted in 2021. Our information was 23,202 caribou, and the most recent 2023 survey estimated 39,525. That's a pretty increasing population.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the member's question whether a new information in regards to how we manage the caribou population in the Kitikmeot region, that information will be based on a new survey, which the department is not going to conduct in a short time, but from our 2023 survey, it's encouraging to see the population growth.

We will continue to analyze and assess the population estimate in that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) thank you for that.

Can the Minister confirm how many charges if any have been laid by his department within the last 12 months in respect of contraventions of harvesting regulations, concerning either the Blue Nose East caribou herd or the Dolphin-Union caribou herd. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's a very high-level, detailed question, and I do not have the information in front of me. But I can get back to the member in writing about the enforcement action that has been taken for the Blue Nose East and Dolphin-Union herd, and provide more detailed information to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral questions. Member for Aivilik. Mr. Malliki.

Question 947 – 6(2): Nunavut Development Corporation (Malliki)

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Nunavut Development Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the two communities that I represent in the Legislative Assembly are both small and non-decentralized communities. My constituents want to work, but there is a lack of employment opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the *Nunavut Development Corporation Act* states very clearly that the purpose of the corporation is to "create employment and income for residents of Nunavut, primarily in small communities."

Can the Minister indicate what initiative that corporation is currently undertaking on that will directly benefit community of Coral Harbour and Naujaat? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Last week they met. I haven't received a report yet what endeavours they will be pursuing, which I anticipate, and during the meeting I did encourage them to consider communities that have not been focused on and what further actions could be made. So I cannot really respond to the question my colleague is asking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) (No interpretation).

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Development Corporation presently has subsidiaries operating in a number of Kivalliq communities: Kivalliq Arctic Foods, Ivalu, located in Rankin Inlet. The Jessie Oonark Centre in Baker Lake, Kudluk is located in Arviat, and Papirug Fisheries is located in Whale Cove. Mr. Speaker my position is that all Kivalliq

communities, including Naujaat and Coral, to have at least one Nunavut Development Corporation subsidiary operating.

Does the Minister share my position? Yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have challenged the board of directors for the Nunavut Development Corporations to expand more as we want to diversify our local economies, and its one that I am going to continue to work with the board. And it's at the board level that makes those decisions, so I couldn't just say yes or no today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's 2023-2024 letter of expectation to Nunavut Development Corporation's board of directors indicate that it should "seek new projects and investment in our commercial fisheries and harvesting sector that will lead to enhanced employment and income-earning opportunities for Nunavut hunters, fisherman positions, processing plant workers, and support for Nunavut businesses, enterprise operating in these sectors."

The response from the board of directors indicate that it had "recently mentioned that a country food processing plant be established somewhere else in the Baffin region. We are currently waiting to receive information from QC to see if we can establish this goal together."

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to including direction to the next letter of expectation to ensure that the Nunavut Development Corporation also work with partners in Kivalliq region to establish new country food processing facilities in either Naujaat or Coral Harbour? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 948 – 6(2): Nunavut Household Allowance for Staff

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance today on the topic of the Nunavut household allowance for Government of Nunavut staff.

As the Minister is very aware, there are different types of rental agreements that people sign onto. Some include utilities, some do not include utilities. When I look at the policy I don't see an answer to the question that I'm going to ask, so that's why I'm asking it.

Mr. Speaker, when it talks about the rental rate threshold on the different size housing units that qualify under the Nunavut Household Allowance Program, it doesn't identify whether utility rates are considered in that rental rate threshold. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our thresholds in terms of those, Mr. Speaker, doesn't outline a number of things, but in terms of applicants must be indeterminant. And the Government of Nunavut employees, they have to own or rent a home above the rental rate to occupy the units as their principle residence, and the number of other things, but no, it doesn't say, doesn't have those specific details that my colleague is requesting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was why I asked the question, because it isn't clarified in the policy. In the Minister's opinion, should utility rates such as fuel, power, water and sewer be considered as an increase to the rental rate that's being paid already? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: You asked for an opinion from the Minister. Should be asking what is the position of the minister. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of criteria in order to receive the benefit, Mr. Speaker, and it is to help those that are renting units to be able to afford them more, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's a matter of whether my opinion is yes or no, but our department, when dealing with benefits and those that apply for these benefits, they go through a process. Our department screens them.

There's a combination of how much the rent is and how much other factors are in those, Mr. Speaker. Our department takes a look at them and then they are approved or not

approved, Mr. Speaker, and once they're not approved there is an opportunity for the individuals to appeal those, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think it would be fair for me to stand here and give, not so much an opinion, but whether I support the process or not, Mr. Speaker.

I am in full support of the current process, and I have been talking with our department in terms of these to see if there are necessary tweaks and/or work to maybe make it more user-friendly and more clear, in terms of why or why not of these programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, I thank you for correcting me. I did mean to say "position".

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is just talking about making sure we recognize and appreciate our employees, it is very clear that some rental agreements do differ. If somebody is paying rent on a unit where the power is included, the heat is included, other utilities are included, the rent will be higher, where other people just have their base rent and they're responsible for those expenses outside of their rental payment. So it would be an artificially low rental payment where the same expenses are still being brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, in the policy I was looking at, it does state that eligibility that there may be circumstances that allow for eligibility to the program outside of the requirements set above; for clarity on eligibility, please contact Department of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent that did contact the Department of Finance and did submit an application, and was rejected; then appealed it to the Deputy Minister of Finance where the rent is very close to the threshold that is outlined, the rental rate threshold, but they're responsible for all utility payments, Mr. Speaker, incurring close to seven or eight hundred dollars a month, bringing their rent well above the threshold.

I would like the Minister to consider, as is stated, that they do have the opportunity to change the eligibility for the program outside the requirements.

In addition, in the policy it states that the prerogative of executive council, nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the executive council to make decisions or take actions.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage the minister and his cabinet colleagues to look at this to make sure all our employees are treated fairly, with the expenses that they incur through their rent, through utilities, or whatever, to make sure that it still does follow the rental threshold. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is being followed fairly. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more to these issues that we can talk about in this House. I don't want to get into a one-on-one in terms of this individual or that individual. The policy has to reflect everybody, in terms of that.

But as I said, this is a living document and we will take a look at areas where it may need to be tweaked, one way or the other, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 949 – 6(2): Chesterfield Inlet Power Plant

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation.

As the Minister will recall, I asked him a number of questions during this year's winter sitting concerning the plan to replace one of the generators at the Chesterfield Inlet power plant. In September of this year, the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued a request for proposal for the design, manufacture, supply and installation of a generator set. The request for proposal closes on November 11, just over two weeks from now.

Earlier this year, the Minister stated that he has submitted the corporation application for the Utility Rates Review Council. When will the council's final report be provided to my office and made public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, I'm unable to provide responses on behalf of the Utility Rates Review Council, so I'm not sure if this question would be more appropriate to direct to the Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council. I'm looking for your guidance, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you. If I could get the member to repeat the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) My apologies.

Speaker: Please repeat your question, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Mr. Speaker, in September of this year the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued the request for proposal for the design, manufacture, supply and installation of a new generator set. The request for proposal closes November 11, just over two weeks from now. Earlier this year the minister stated that he has submitted the corporation's application for the Utility Rates Review Council. When will the council's final report be provided to my office and made public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate the member for bringing that question again. Unfortunately I don't have that information with me at this moment, but I could commit to getting back to the member on that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Qulliq Energy Corporation's applications for the Chesterfield Inlet generator set replacement project indicates that its budget is approximately 5.3 million. Can the Minister clearly indicate if this will have an impact on power rates charged to the residents and businesses in Chesterfield Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Now you are asking a question to the Qulliq Energy Corporation. Just a minute. Thank you. Is the Minister of Qulliq Energy Corporation willing to answer the question that is asked? Hon. Minister of Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the question, in terms of the effect on power rates, any changes in power rates have to be approved or reviewed through the Utility Rates Review Council, and as the member knows, Nunavut is under a unified power rate now, and so if we were to, if there were financial ramifications from capital investments, it would be shared across Nunavut across the different rate classes.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention that we very much appreciate the Arctic Energy Fund and the \$175 million from our federal partners that is accessible through that fund. And so the Qulliq Energy Corporation has been making use of Arctic Energy Fund resources to lessen the burden on ratepayers in Nunavut, and we're very much looking to the federal government releasing Arctic Energy Fund 2.0, the next version of that fund. There's a huge list of infrastructure projects that we want to work on, and we're going to need additional federal support to move those forward quickly. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Chesterfield Inlet current power plant has been working hard for over half a century and is due for retirement. In 2022 the Utility Rates Review Council recommended that Qulliq Energy Corporation's applications to construct new power plants in Chesterfield Inlet and Kugaaruk be approved. However, the projects were cancelled by the government due to lack of funding.

Can the Minister provide a clear update today on the status of its effort to secure additional funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. Yes, in terms of the cancellation, or the delay of that Chesterfield Inlet power plant project, you know, that was unfortunate, and that was something that reflected extreme inflation in capital costs that we've been facing.

I look at the member's colleague from Kugluktuk, I know that community is waiting for their power plant very eagerly. I was speaking with the community leadership recently.

We need additional federal funds. The premier co-hosted a recent meeting here in Iqaluit where I was very happy that minister Sean Fraser was present, and we did take the opportunity to reiterate we need federal support for this, and we need partners if we're going to deliver on much needed infrastructure in Chesterfield Inlet. But for the time being, we continue to lobby and look for ways to deliver more projects at a cheaper cost. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 950 – 6(2): Intergovernmental Relations

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I extend my condolences from the member from Kugluktuk. I know all too well the deep sadness of losing, having a missing loved one.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the premier, who is Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and who has overarching responsibility for intergovernmental relations. As the premier will recall, I began our fall sitting by tabling a copy of my correspondence to the prime minister that I wrote this past summer concerning the lengthy and unacceptable delays in filing key federally appointed positions in Nunavut, including our territory's senator, chief justice, and deputy commissioner.

Shortly after I sent my letter to Ottawa, the Prime Minister's Office replied to me and confirmed the appointment of Mr. Lew Phillips as our new deputy commissioner.

The reply also indicated that our government is continuing to work on the Nunavut senator and chief justice appointments.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the premier meets and talks frequently with the prime minister, and we know that he has heard from members of this House that it is imperative that these positions be filled as quickly as possible, given the uncertainties posed by the current political climate in Ottawa, especially.

Mr. Speaker can the premier indicate what reasons he has been provided with for these lengthy and unacceptable delays? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for bringing this question forward. I did have a chance to read the correspondence that was tabled here, and I really appreciate her advocacy as well on the need of filling very important positions that have been vacant.

Mr. Speaker, we are in weekly conversations with the Prime Minister's Office, lobbying, and really the importance of filling especially the senate position, which I know, with only one MP, that one senator plays such a crucial role, as well as the chief justice. Those are the two positions right now that are outstanding.

I can confirm that we are in weekly conversations with the PMO, the Prime Minister's Office, pushing for the appointments to be made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The premier didn't answer my question about what reasons he may have been given about these delays, and I think it's really important to publicly state what those reasons are, if there have been reasons provided.

Mr. Speaker, one of the summer rituals of the intergovernmental affairs in Canada is the Council of the Federation's annual meeting of provincial and territorial premiers. This year's event took place in July, and it resulted in a number of announcements being issued. One of those announcements indicated, Mr. Speaker, that premiers urged the prime minister to work with provinces and territories to address the high cost of groceries and food, and to work with retailers to bring these costs down.

Mr. Speaker, you and my colleagues will recall that I raised the issue of the upcoming external review of the Nutrition North Canada program in the House last week. Can the premier confirm what response the Council of the Federation received from the prime minister in response to its call to in action in this area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my colleague for that question. To the first point, we aren't involved in the process and I have really pushed for the expedited appointment of that important position, and I have not heard in terms of the delay. We continue to push and we will continue to advocate for the prime minister, who controls that process through an independent body, to make that appointment.

As specifically to the member's question, and for the work to date, I was very pleased to be in Halifax this summer, hosted by our good friend Tim Houston, who is the chair. During that work there's many important issues that are important right across this country, and the discussion about the high cost of living, the affordability, is no different here in the north.

As such I was very pleased when Minister Van Dal was recently here on the recent review to happen on Nutrition North, and it is through that that I'm looking forward to having my colleague through Family Services to lead that from a whole-of-government approach which I know impacts all of us here across the north. Through that work is where we'll participate in terms of the work.

I believe I have not seen any correspondence back from the prime minister specifically to the concerns we brought forward, but I do look forward to the next Council of the Federation meeting scheduled for December and that's something that I'm looking forward to getting an update from my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the premier is in the unique position to have the ability to demand information and demand results from the prime minister when it comes to acting on those very important appointments, and it is incumbent upon the premier to push for those appointments to occur as quickly as possible, without delay, and to demand a rationale for those delayed actions on those appointments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I listened closely last week to my colleagues from Baker Lake and Kugluktuk when they spoke strongly about the importance of critical minerals to both our territory's economic future and our planet's clean energy transition. This summer's meeting of the Council of the Federation also resulted in announcements concerning energy and critical minerals.

Mr. Speaker, in August of this year the Chinese ambassador travelled to Iqaluit, and we know that the country's undemocratic regime is under scrutiny by the ongoing national inquiry into foreign interference in our elections. We know that the federal government had to step in a few years to block the sale of a Nunavut mine to a Chinese state interest.

Mr. Speaker, news reports indicate that the ambassador was planning to meet with the premier during his visit, and I can only assume that it was for the purpose of advancing Chinese economic interests in the north, including access to our critical mineral deposits. Can the premier tell us what the Chinese ambassador wanted from our government, and can the premier tell us how he responded? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I thank my colleague for that question. Absolutely, there has been a renewed interest to the north with the unprovoked war Russia did with Ukraine, and then in the last few years in particular there has been special attention given to the north. And it really has given us an opportunity to push and support nation-building projects that provide incredible economic opportunity for the territory, whether it's the Grays Bay Road and Port Project that I know has been brought forward many times in this House; whether it's the Kivalliq hydro fibre link, or the hydro project here in Iqaluit. These are really exciting nation-building projects that are forthcoming, and those are the projects that we continue to bring forward at the Council of the Federation, or whether they are Arctic circle or whether we're here meeting with foreign affairs ministers from Canada as well as the Nordic countries. It really gives us an incredible platform to push forward these very exciting projects.

There are many ambassadors that do come, and the member is right; we had the ambassador come to Nunavut. The discussions around that were centred around

relationship-building and the opportunities that the north presents. We really came in from a listening viewpoint. We wanted to understand what's important there, as we always do to all ambassadors that do come.

But there was no decision that came out of that meeting, but it was one where it did touch upon critical minerals but also the opportunities for the north. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 951 – 6(2): Street Lighting

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation. Mr. Speaker, as you know, our Arctic winters are very long and dark, and it is important for public safety that the streets of our communities be well lit. Mr. Speaker, concerns have been brought to my attention that a number of street lights in the community of Taloyoak are in need of replacement, and it has been brought to my attention that some areas of town are not well lit.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister is aware, section 6.0 of the Qulliq Energy Corporation's terms and conditions of service addresses the subject of municipal street lighting service. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister clearly indicate how the municipality can request the Qulliq Energy Corporation to enhance the current level of street lighting in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the member indicated, QEC is responsible for providing street light services, including new installations and repairs, and so the process for requesting installation of a new street light -- I'll try and summarize this; I have full page of information, but I know you want us to be quick, Mr. Speaker.

The hamlet office completes an application form, submits it to QEC. Upon receipt of the application QEC's engineering team will make an assessment. The applicant will be required to sign a customer service order for a new lighting service, and then we also require a deposit to proceed with the service request. Hamlets are advised to submit applications as soon as possible.

There's a few other steps beyond that, but I believe that summarizes it. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you minister for your response. Mr. Speaker, I'm also concerned that the community of Kugaaruk has safe and well lit streets. Can the Minister describe how often the Qulliq Energy Corporation undertakes assessments of community needs in respect to street lighting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the process of inspecting the street lights or making assessments, we rely heavily on municipalities for pointing us in the right direction, whether it is areas needing new street lights or areas needing repairs. We do have street light installation and maintenance costs factored into our annual budget, so this is something that is part of our job and we make efforts to respond to requests for either repair or for new installation as soon as possible from municipalities.

There can be factors in terms of ground conditions and weather for new installation, but efforts are made to complete installations as soon as possible. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly approved 2 million in capital funding between the 2020-2021 and 2023-2024 fiscal years for the Qulliq Energy Corporation to undertake an LED street lighting replacement project. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate the extent to which the new LED street lights have achieved the goal of being longer-lasting and more energy efficient than the previous technology used by the corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I think the correct way to respond to the member is that we don't quite know yet. These new street lights are still being put into real-life testing situations, right across Nunavut. The promise of the LED lights is more durability, lower energy usage, and potentially more safety, more light coming out of the fixture. But we are actively monitoring the implementation and how they are doing up on the poles across Nunavut and lighting our communities. It is still early stages in terms of that project. We should know or have a more formal assessment in the coming years. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members be aware time allotted for question period is now over. Member Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend the oral question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays.

An Hon. Member: Nay.

Speaker: There is a nay. Item 7. Written questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 7: Written Questions

Question 010 – 6(2): Public and Staff Housing Construction

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written questions today are for the Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, and they concern the subject of public and staff housing construction. Mr. Speaker, my written questions are detailed, so I ask that they be entered into the record as read. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members requesting that his written questions be entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

Some Members: We agree.

Speaker: There is an agreement. 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 -- premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Sorry, guys. Could I get a clarification what order of business we're in. I was asking to get the consent of the members to go back to item number 5 of the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The members wants to return back to item number 5 on the order paper. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Agreed. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and apologies there, members. I would like to recognize someone very special, a special guest to us. The vice president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Mr. Paul Irngaut is here, as well as Taqqialuk Peter. So I really wanted to welcome them to their House and to recognize their incredible work, whether it's the work we're doing on the trauma treatment centre, Aqqusariaq, or whether it's suicide prevention among others. I just wanted to recognize the members. Thank you for allowing me, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the report of the Standing Committee on the review of the 2022-2023 public accounts of Nunavut. The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the most recently tabled set of public accounts from September 19, 2024. The Standing Committee's hearing was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly, and was televised live across the territory. The hearing was open to the public and news media to observe from the visitor's gallery, it was live-streamed on the Legislative Assembly's web site.

The transcript from the Standing Committee's hearing is 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. The Standing Committee notes its appreciation to the witnesses.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee's report contains six sets of formal recommendations directed to the Government of Nunavut which cover a number of thematic areas that were addressed during our televised hearing, including:

- The government's response to the Standing Committee's report on the review of the 2021-22 public accounts;
- The reasons for the late tabling of the 2022-2023 public accounts;
- The government's audit of the Petroleum Product Revolving Fund;

- Budgetary and financial management, sustainability and flexibility;
- Transparency in financial reporting;
- Risks and uncertainties, including liabilities related to contaminated sites and the use of estimates to determine potential remediation costs;
- The activities of the Government of Nunavut's Contaminated Sites Working Group;
- Changes in accounting standards that have been issued by the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada; and
- The status of Comptrollership Branch priorities and initiatives that are contained in the Department of Finance's current Business Plan.

Mr. Speaker, looking ahead, the Standing Committee looks forward to holding a televised hearing during the spring of 2025 on the 2023-2024 public accounts. This hearing is anticipated to allow detailed consideration of a number of emerging issues and themes, including:

- Administration of the treasury management policy and investment regulations;
- Human resources capacity and recruitment strategies to address vacant financial management positions in the Government of Nunavut;
- Implementation of the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada's new standard, PS3160, concerning public-private partnerships, otherwise known as P3s;
- Results of audits of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund and the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund;
- Enhancement of transparency in respect to reporting of territorial tax revenues associated with the natural resources extractive sector;
- Enhancement of transparency in respect to reporting of carbon tax revenues;
- Impact of the recently signed Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement of territorial royalty revenues and liabilities in respect to contaminated sites;
- Administration of departmental grants and contributions, including updates to the Financial Administration Manual Directive 801; and
- Expansion of the range of electronic formats in which the Government of Nunavut's publications and data are made publicly available, and achievement of greater alignment of and consistency between figures and formats in the public accounts and other publications, including annual reports on grants and contributions expenditures, contracting, and procurement and leasing activities.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to note for the record that the Standing Committee is requesting that the government provide a comprehensive response to this report, pursuant to rule 91(5) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

With that 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 13, Tabling of Documents. Hon. Member of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 306 – 6(2): Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan 2023-2028

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am please to table the 2023-2028 Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 307 – 6(2): Resolutions Passed at the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to have the opportunity today to table copies of the formal resolutions that were passed at the recently held 2024 annual general meeting of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to the hard work of the association's leadership, and I encourage all members to review the document with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Tabled Document 306 – 6(2): Hamlet of Sanirajak Motion on Emergency Measures Services

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues. Here I would like to table today the hamlet's council meeting in Hall Beach on emergency preparedness. I would like everyone to read the report diligently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. I see no more. Item 14, Notices of Motions. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 40 – 6(2): Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act - Rescinded

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 30, 2024 I will move the following motion: "Now therefore I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that Bill 59, *An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be rescinded from the order paper."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 15, Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Item 15: Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

Bill 60 – An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act – First Reading

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I give notice that on October 29, 2024 that Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act be read for the first time. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 16, Motions. Item 17, First Reading of Bills. Item 18, Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Item 18: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 50 – Fuel Tax Act – Second Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 50, *Fuel Tax Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for levying a consumption tax on fuel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Bill 51 – Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, move seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Bill 51, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act* be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this Bill corrects any errors in previous *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act*, and makes improvements to various acts, including by repealing obsolete provisions and according with the federal law. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Bill 52 – An Act to Amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 52, *An Act to Amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill amends the *Technical Standards and Safety Act* to allow for separate repeal provisions of the *Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act*, the *Electrical Protection Act*, and the *Gas Protection Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Bill 56 – Write-Off of Assets and Debts Act, 2023-2024 – Second Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq that Bill 56, Write-Off of Assets and Debts Act, 2023-2024 be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the write-off of assets and debts in accordance with section 24 and 82 of the Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the Bill is referred to the Standing Committee on legislation. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Bill 58 – An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Joanasie: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 58, *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* to allow for certain annual multipliers to be published by way of notice rather than an amendment to regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Bill 64 – Post-Secondary Support Act – Second Reading

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, that Bill 64, *Post-Secondary Support Act* be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for grants, loans, incentives and non-financial supports to be provided to post-secondary students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Bill 65 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Second Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Finally, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. I move seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq that Bill 65, an Act to Amend the Income Tax Act be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this act amends the Income Tax Act to extend eligibility for the fire fighter tax credit for search and rescue volunteers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Item 19, Consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bills and Other Matters; Bill 53, 54, 55 and 61 with Mr. Hickes in the chair. I ask that all members proceed immediately to the member lounge. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 15:45 and Committee resumed at 16:15

Chairman (Mr. George Hickes): Thank you. I would like to call the Committee meeting to order. I would like to ask Mr. Kusugak: Do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do.

Speaker: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let the member's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. Thank you. In the Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 53, 54, 55 and 61. What is the wish of the committee, Mr. Malliki?

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with Bill 61, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2025-2026* and supporting documents for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Are we in agreement we first deal with Bill 61?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak, can you please introduce your officials.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Eiryn Devereaux, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and to my left is Syl Vardy (ph), Chief Financial Officer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. And where we left off, we didn't get to Committee of the Whole on Friday, but on Thursday we completed opening comments, and there was an opportunity to put general comments to the opening comments. I would just like to revisit that and give members an opportunity if they have any general comments from the opening comments from Thursday afternoon. I see no one.

We'll proceed to questions. Nunavut Housing Corporation. Amount being appropriated: \$109,771,000. Any questions? Sorry, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question. The first question I would like to ask is: The Hamlet of Pond Inlet is always preparing for the new housing that is going to be built for public housing and staff housing. The eight units that were going to be built in Pond Inlet, I believe there is some delays or something. I would like to know what's happening with that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The houses slated to Pond Inlet are now in the community, and the planning is being done for the lots, and in

springtime when it's construction season, construction will start. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister for letting us know about that. I would like to move on to staff housing.

There are 68 staff houses in Pond Inlet, and some of them have been slated non-liveable. I would like an update on those. The units that are not available to be moved into, what's going to happen, are they going to be repaired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, the units, the staff houses in Pond Inlet are 68, yes, and 15 are ready for moving into. And the ones that need to be repaired, they are going to be worked on as funding becomes available so that they can be liveable again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister. I would like an indication as to when they can be repaired. It's quite a number of units that the government owns that staff cannot move into. When will they be repaired and be ready for people to move into. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Up to October 2024, there are 51 units that need to be repaired for staff housing. There's a total of 51 units that need repairs.

There's 33 in the Baffin, and 11 in the Kitikmeot and some in the Keewatin. They will be repaired once the requests for proposal have been completed for each unit. We will expect them to be repaired in the coming months.

There are different kinds of work that needs to be done in each unit, but we're working on preparing RFPs or requests for proposals that people will repair them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): (No audio)

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll have couple lines of question. The 2022 federal budget announced 845 million in funding over seven years to support housing in Inuit communities. How much of this funding has been accessed to date by the Nunavut Housing Corporation to implement its new Nunavut 3000 strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of this has funding has been allocated through the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Mr. Chairman. And we don't have access to when and how the expenditure building will be done. But in terms of what NHC is doing, maybe if I could have the president respond, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. The reference to the 845 million, I think that might refer to the Inuit-specific funding from the federal government that was targeted to ITK, and then an amount to that flowed to NTI for them to address housing supply issues.

We've been fortunate to secure funding from various federal departments. Over the last few years we continue to seek more funding. Right now, the most recent federal funds we received was through Housing Accelerating Fund, approximately 27 million to support hamlets with land development. And we're currently waiting for the federal government to open up the applications for the urban rural northern stream, which was a \$4 billion housing fund. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Devereaux. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Devereaux for your response. I'm move on to my next question.

In May of 2022, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated released its Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan, the plan indicated that a new Inuit housing entity will ensure funding issues in the best way to improve housing for Inuit. Community members, municipalities, the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Canada are important partners.

The question is, Mr. Chairman, how many Inuit new housing units are planned to be constructed by the Inuit housing entity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not a clue. I don't speak for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and what they do with that funding and how they go about it, Mr. Chairman. To be quite blunt, we do not have the answer to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on. The Nunavut 3000 strategy contains public housing wait list numbers that are dated March 31, 2022. The question is, Mr. Chairman, when will the Nunavut Housing Corporation publish updated community wait lists. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We publish it in our annual report every year. This year it's a little bit later, but when we do publish our annual report, it will be in there this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On January 31, 2024 the Nunavut Housing Corporation and NCC Development announced the signing of the 2024 annual allocation and purchase agreements design built contracts to develop 166 new housing units, 146 public housing units, and 20 staff housing units in 17 communities.

The question is, Mr. Chairman, when will agreements be made public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on. The Nunavut 3000 2022-2023 Progress Report indicates that there will be 166 housing started during the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The report indicates that public housing units starts are scheduled for the communities of Arviat, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay, Clyde River, Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Taloyoak. The question is, Mr. Chairman, are these numbers still current. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to elaborate a little bit on the previous question regarding publishing the agreement, I believe we won't be publishing our contractual agreement with NCC, but we will be publishing the annual updates in terms of what is building built and where we are in those processes.

In terms of the question to the building of the housing units, yes, those numbers are correct. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question, and it's a follow-up question. What methodology was used to determine the specific community allocations. That will be my last question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the first two years, we want to ensure every community has housing starts. I believe this question is in line with the 2026 builds. They are along the same lines and by need, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one topic that I would like to ask a few rounds of questions about, and that's staff housing. The Nunavut Housing Corporation has allocated a modest \$12 million for an estimated 12 new staff housing units to be constructed in the upcoming capital plan. Can you elaborate on how that \$10 million and approximate amount of units was determined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In dealing with staff housing, we work with other departments, human resources, and other departments in terms of seeing where the greatest needs are in building staff housing units.

This year we budgeted for the number my colleague mentioned, and we have to decided where those units are going to go, Mr. Chairman, but we collaborate with other departments to work towards that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nunavut Housing Corporation's budget requests are quite easy to approve. There's obviously a clear need. I guess the question remains about where, and when, and how.

We all know that the Government of Nunavut is in a severe staff housing shortage. So I guess the next question I would like to ask is why so few staff housing units are being requested for construction dollars in the upcoming fiscal year, and secondly, how do you determine the ratio of public housing to staff housing allocations. Thank you, Chair.

Speaker: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you very much. I really appreciate that line of questioning. It's always hard, Mr. Chairman, when you're trying to deal with housing, because of the shortage of public housing, shortage of staff housing, you only have a certain amount of money to work with. So it's a lot of work behind the scenes to try to figure out the best way to tackle this.

Mr. Chairman, I should also include in there, there are other avenues we are pursuing. Aside from building staff housing, we're looking at alternative housing units for potential staff or government employees to seek. So different ways of funding for their needs to privatize that part. And also, this does not stop us from working with the private sector to be able to leave staff housing units that the private sector is building.

We're aware that there are private sector people out there, private companies that are building apartments and housing units. And we will continue to look for staff housing through those channels through the private sector if it's required. So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you. In the past, the Nunavut Housing Corporation has indicated that Nunavut is in an estimated housing deficit of around 3,000 units and that's in the public housing aspect. Has the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Department of Human Resources taken a similar view point at our current staff housing needs to determine a similar sort of ballpark figure compared to that 3,000 public housing unit estimation. Just in essence, what is our estimated staff housing demand for the Government of Nunavut and the future plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you Mr. Chairman. That's always a tough question to try to answer when you try to find out how many of our staff are looking to get out of public

housing units or how many staff are we trying to get out of public housing units into their own or get them into staff housing units.

It's a constant struggle between the departments and the housing committee to see what jobs qualify for staff housing units, and how much more housing units do we need in the communities to fulfil housing requirements.

Mr. Chairman, that's pretty difficult to nail in terms of exact numbers. But maybe the president of the corporation could make that attempt through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. Certainly we have looked at that particular aspect of the need or the demand for staff housing. I guess in its simplest form, you look at the number of employees across the GN compared to the size of our staff housing portfolio. We have approximately 1,800 units in our staff housing portfolio.

Maybe the bigger sort of contemplation is around the need for more housing across Nunavut, not just GN staff housing that we manage. Part of the strategy on Nunavut 3000 is to try to see more affordable housing options for all Nunavummiut, including GN employees.

So if we are successful and we see approximately 1,000 new affordable rental units, market units, whether it's rental or homeownership then, you know, we can't say, but in theory hundreds of those units potentially go to GN employees who aren't inside the GN staff housing program.

So I think the need is great for housing across the board for all Nunavummiut. And when we dive into GN employees, we want to have more options for those employees than just the standard GN staff housing program that's been around for decades. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Devereaux and Minister Kusugak, for your responses. I do appreciate where you're coming from, but I do strongly believe we need a more organized approach when it comes to dealing with staff housing demands and the plans to meet them.

I do appreciate that Nunavut 3000 will help to alleviate the staff housing shortage, but again, that's in 2030 whereas we have a staff housing crisis today in 2024 as well as in 2025 and 2026.

So I strongly believe that we need to also accelerate the construction development of staff housing, stop taking units off the market but add units to the market.

And lastly, there's several major capital projects in the capital estimates that are nearing completion. For example, the Rankin Inlet Long Term Care Facility, as well as Akausisarvik Mental Health Facility here, in Iqaluit. Both have substantial staff housing requirements. Both were entered into the capital plan with a 10 million budget line to build staff housing to meet that expected demand need, but due to the cost overruns, both of those projects lost the \$10 million budget for new staff housing.

So the question I would like to ask to the Nunavut Housing Corporation is that since those capital projects have lost the budget for staff housing, they have entered a line in there that states when the project comes on line we meet with NHC to meet housing requirements when needed.

So the question for NHC is when these capital projects that are in the books in our capital plan today, when these come on line, how will NHC work with the departments and the staff housing allocation community to ensure that units are available in time to open those facilities, and more importantly, to address the staff housing needs for all future capital projects as well? Last question. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my colleague knows, the corporation is more in terms of building units and not trying to allocate them for certain departments, although they participate through the committee. But we are working with, and communicating as we speak, with the different companies out there.

There are regional Inuit corporations that we are communicating with to see if they would be interested in doing some construction and building staff housing units. So that work continues.

We continue to look for partners in construction. You know, what we're doing right now is pretty much maxing out all the abilities to build this many houses, public housing and staff housing. But we are working with the regional Inuit corporations as an example and different companies to see if they would be interested to work with the corporation to build more houses, in this particular case for staff housing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Lightstone, I thought I would remind committee members to let me know if they want their names added to the list. Mr. Lightstone, *taima*. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'll start off by from the Minister's opening comments. On the first page, the last paragraph there it states:

"We are pleased to report that 541 new housing units are either in construction or have been completed as of December 31, 2023."

My first question is the number of units in each year, like we know that in 2022, one hundred percent of the tenders were cancelled, so that there was no construction going on other than previous ones from the last government.

How many houses were constructed in 2023, staff housing and public housing, and 2024?

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're just trying to get our numbers straight here. As of 2023, we had 172 housing units, and in 2024, 166 percent, not 34. So about 200. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I believe the member has also asked for the breakdown, how many were public housing units and how many were staff housing units. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I don't know the breakdown of how many were staff housing units and how many were public housing units in front of me, but up to today we have built a total of about 394 housing units. The majority of these are public housing units. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just simple math then, the minister just stated they built about 394. Where did the 541 number come from then, because the minister just said they started building roughly 394, and in the opening comments here it says 4541. Is there an explanation. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think maybe it needs to be explained a little bit better. On that last paragraph, it says that it is the first time that housing development of all types is under way in all 25 communities.

Mr. Chairman, that 541 new housing units is the number we got from the building permit office. This does not say that housing corporation is building 541 units. This says that there are 541 units being built in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Savikataaq, I would like to get some clarification. What the minister means by under construction. Mr. Quqqiaq had some questions last week on some delayed construction projects in one of his communities. Would that number be included in 'under construction', even though the lot is not even started being prepared. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under construction starts from the ground up. And so when they have to do the work and the materials are there, that includes construction, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarity then, when a project or construction has started for public housing or staff housing unit, there's actual physical work that has been done, either the plow (ph) has been put in there, the pad has been made, and more than likely the building material is there. Just a clarification. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: That's correct, the building materials and everything is there, the pad work is there. Mr. Chairman, in some cases, the pad work might have been delayed because the community was not able to complete the pad in time. But, yes, the material is there in the communities and in some form of construction, if it's the earth work, or they're putting walls up or framing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going on, in the opening comments again on page 2 at the very top, it says: "We are anticipating another 320 building permits for new housing units to be issued this year." Is that the definition of construction costs now, when a building permit has been issued, or that has to be actual building material in the location of the community. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It states that we're anticipating another 320 building permits for new housing units to be issued this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that, but what I'm asking for is construction started when a building permit is issued? Because you can get a building permit and have no material there. Or is construction considered started when there's actual material in the community. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the housing corporation, construction starts when we are preparing the land. And sometimes the material is already there, so construction starts with the preparing of the land. And we know that in all the cases of the housing corporation (indiscernible) that we are doing, all the material is there.

And in terms this budget that we are putting forward, that material will be there in the next sea lift into those communities that we are requesting housing for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All these construction starts that have started since 2023, has any public housing units been turned over to the housing corporation that were started by Nunavut Development Corporation? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe as of right now, as of today, there are 18 that have been turned over, but we're anticipating more as this year goes on and housing starts to be completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. In what community or communities are those 18 units that have been turned over to the local housing association. Thank you.

Chairman: I think I could answer that one. Here, in Iqaluit. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Thank you, minister.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Savikataaq: Going on with construction there. Last year when we were doing the same process that I asked about what the construction cost was and what the Inuit employment was with NCC Development Corporation contracts and the communities and we were told it's too early yet, we're working on it, and we were asked to approach the budget without knowing construction costs or Inuit employment numbers. What is -- I'll use Arviat, for example. We have two buildings being built, our eight-plex and 12-plex. The eight-plex, the exterior is not done yet. I saw it just before I came here. I don't know if they're working inside or not. The 12-plex, the walls are done on the first floor, and maybe some rafters for the second floor. And this is one year in construction so far. Does the Nunavut Housing Corporation know what construction cost per square foot is in Arviat. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Devereaux elaborate a bit on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the member for the question. In the construction contracts with NCC, I think we spoke on this on the prior year, there is a contractual obligation to meet a 30 percent Inuit employment. So that exists. And these are fixed priced contracts. So we've reported last year to the cost per square foot for construction. It's in the neighbourhood of 600 to 650 dollars per square foot. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's quite a difference between targeting Inuit employment and what it actually is. For example, the Government of Nunavut target Inuit employment is 85 percent, but we know that it's roughly about 51 percent, so there's quite a difference there. You said there's targeted 30 percent Inuit employment with NCC Development Corporation, so I'll ask again what is the percentage of the Inuit employment for the contract in Arviat. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minimum target for Inuit employment is 30 percent across the board. So 30 percent is the minimum target in every community developing houses, Mr. Chairman.

As we all know, there will be times when that number fluctuates. But at the end of the day, when we get our report from the corporation, from the Nunavut Construction Corporation, we expect to see that target being met or exceeded.

And that number fluctuates. Sometimes there might be over 30 percent, and sometimes they might be a bit under, but that is our target. As far as I understand, we are at or above 30 percent target, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So what is it in Arviat, as of your last report from NCC Development Corporation, what is the Inuit employment numbers in percentage the last report you got. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have that information in front of us, in terms of Arviat's percentages, but when I do get it, I would be more than happy to share it with my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that commitment. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to assume that the reports have been filed, because they have been working for over a year in Arviat. When can I get that information from the Minister. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As soon as I can make it available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Well that's what I'm asking. Have you received any Inuit employment reports from Arviat for that project there. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've received some reports. I don't know what in detail. I can't remember exactly what is in those reports, but when I get that

information, I will be more than happy to share it with my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't understand why the minister doesn't have it. In the old system where the contracts went out, every time the Minister of Housing was sitting here, in the Committee of the Whole when the Minister was asked what the Inuit employment elaborate was, they knew it's at 30 percent, it's at 40 percent, or whatever. They knew.

The construction has been going on for a year in Arviat. So has the minister received any reports since the beginning of construction on Inuit employment in Arviat. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the corporation has received reports. Mr. Chairman, I said this earlier they're at 30 percent or better. I don't know what the difference between saying it's at 30 percent or better now is any different than previous years when other ministers said yeah, we're at 30 percent, Mr. Chairman. When I get that information in detail and in particular to Arviat, I would be more than happy to share it with my colleague.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My point is previous ministers didn't say it's above 30 percent. They knew exactly what the Inuit employment rate was because of the reports they are getting from construction. I'll try one last time. Will this House, or myself in general, receive that information before the end of this sitting on the Inuit employment numbers from NCC Development Corporation in Arviat before the end of this sitting. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to play games. I gave a commitment to the member that I would provide that information as soon as I get it. If my colleague wants it before the end of the sitting, we'll try to make sure that we do have it, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to getting that information. I thought that it would be readily available, as I've been assuming that they get reports on a regular basis on Inuit employment numbers in projects, not the targeted amount, but the actual numbers that are there. Because there could be quite a difference between the targeted amount and what's actually happening. But we are just going back and forth and talking in circles, so I hope to get that information soon, and I'll move on.

Going to affordable housing. Mr. Lightstone talked on this a little bit about this affordable staff housing, I believe, and the minister and I in previous sittings have gone back and forth on what affordable housing is.

I'll start off by asking here, in Iqaluit, what is the average amount that the government or Nunavut Housing Corporation pays to lease houses for staff housing from the private sector. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, technology does wonders, Mr. Chairman, and let me answer the first question before this question. In Arviat, NCC Inuit employment is 34.24 percent, to be exact, as of September. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have my president respond to the latter part of the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. So I guess it's safe to assume we're going to get all our numbers in two decimal points going forward from now on. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Specific to Iqaluit, we do lease quite a number of properties from various landlords. Obviously the average lease rate varies by the type of lease, and also the size of the unit, whether it's a two bedroom, three bedroom, four bedrooms. So we would have an average lease elaborate for two bedroom. I don't have it right in front of me. I'll give you some rough ideas. A two bedroom unit on average is probably renting for upwards of \$3,000. It depends on whether it includes utilities, or doesn't include, because those leases vary, but in that range of about three.

For a three bedroom, you're probably in the range of 3,500 and you're probably close to 4,000 for a four bedroom. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Glad to hear the Nunavut Housing Corporation recognizes the different recognized the different leasing models of utilities, included and not. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the minister for getting back to me. It wasn't that hard to get the numbers out, eh. Technology.

I'll go back to the leasing amounts here. That's roughly how much staff housing units are leased from the private sector to the Nunavut Housing Corporation. And we know that the average individual can't afford to lease a house for, we'll take a three bedroom, I would say that would be the mostly common, 3500 a month. For it to be considered affordable, would it be 2,000 renting it out, or what's considered affordable. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the affordable would be within 30 percent of the income of the individual that is in the unit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should have been more specific. I was referring to staff housing. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Devereaux elaborate on that, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. I think it's a similar response. The question is what is affordable. Affordability is determined by family's income, and not spending any more than 30 percent of that income on all your housing costs.

So in terms of GN staff housing, we heavily subsidize those. The average GN staff housing rent is 1300 for a small unit up, to 1900 for a larger three bedroom unit.

So we say there are affordable, but the reality is affordability is always based upon that individual family.

Having said that, when we tried to create more and incent more affordable housing units, what we're really trying to do is get those units onto the marketplace for whomever, whether it's GN or non-GN employee at below the market rates.

And then if some of those individuals still can't afford it, because it's higher than 30 percent of their income, then you hope you can find other supplements, whether it's like the GN does when we offer a housing benefit, an employment benefit to our staff, as does

other organizations offer subsidy for their employees to try to make that home more affordable for them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would be wandering a little bit into, might not be considered capital for here, but the affordable housing program, the one where I believe it's out now where you can get \$150,000 per unit to bring affordable housing on line. To consider that affordable, that's why I asked about the staff housing, in terms of what rent would it have to be. There's a lot of leasing here going on with in Iqaluit with the government, whether it be the government or whether it be Nunavut Housing Corporation. So it's more established on what is an affordable housing leasing unit, but in the communities it's different. So if we can get an explanation how the affordable part of renting affordable housing in the communities would work. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Devereaux had part of the question before. Can I go directly to him. Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the member for the question. The program that was announced earlier this year for the \$150,000 capital grant is to incentivize the corporation for more affordable rental and/or homeownership units across the territory.

The guidelines that are on our public website discuss the eligibility, and it mentions there that we are seeking at minimum 20 percent below market rental rates.

In all honesty, we think the market rates are overinflated, so we will try to find partners that will be able to deliver a product that's even more than 20 percent below those current high market rates.

So that's what we will target under that program, is trying to create new product that's more affordable in the market at a minimum of 20 percent more affordable. And hopefully we can report some projects that are coming in at 40, 50 percent below market rental rates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With this affordable housing that the \$150,000 per unit to a maximum of 600,000 that individuals can apply for, would hamlets in Nunavut be qualified to apply for that in putting it towards staff housing. Because generally whether you're the government, or hamlet, or housing association, the staff

housing rent is way below the market value of a unit if they're leasing. So would they qualify for that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is jumping the gun a bit, then but the minister is quite aware that in Arviat there's been Sakku has been building a house manufacturing factory, for lack of a better word there, and they will be producing houses. And right now it's in infancy, so we have no idea what the selling cost will be. But if the hamlet in Arviat could, would they qualify to buy houses from there and for satisfy housing and get the 150 houses per unit to a maximum of 600,000 in order to get more staff housing in Arviat. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is yes. And I don't think that we would leave it at a 600,000 maximum. If there's more interest in that, most definitely it would be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and officials. I would like to go back to a part of Mr. Quqqiaq's question regarding Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the federal money they got from the federal government for housing.

I was wondering has there been any discussions between Nunavut Housing Corp. And Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to see if they could partner together and build houses for Inuit, because the majority of the territory is Inuit, so I wonder if there has been any collaboration between the two entities. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been discussions between the two parties. In fact, there's been many discussions between the housing corporation and the regional Inuit associations and their corporations.

We had an agreement signed with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, for an example. We've talked with the Kivalliq Inuit Association to see if there's any kind of programs that we could work with them in the Kitikmeot or Qikiqtani corporation.

In terms of meetings with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the housing corporation, there has been discussion. There has been talk, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification, that would come towards Nunavut 3000 goals, these new housing builds that there are going to be in the new housing builds with the monies that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated acquired from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right at the start of Nunavut 3000 plan, we've been talking about counting every house, regardless of who builds it the company, we are working with different organizations, companies for the Nunavut 3000 plan, so yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, minister. And moving along, again a follow-up to one of Mr. Quqqiaq's question regarding the 2025-2026 fiscal year builds. The question was if the numbers are still current. Do you forecast that changing any time soon. I know you forecast ahead. Is there anything on the horizon that would change these numbers any time before summer 2025. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Taking a look at the public housing targets that we do have on the plan, our targets are right on right now. We do have some issues. There will be times when things fall apart, where maybe a hamlet might not have their land ready yet in advance, and we'll work with them.

In fact, we're working with all the hamlets to ensure that their lands are prepared, so when the housing builds land in their community they have somewhere to build them.

We have staff in our department who now in housing that are now working with municipalities to ensure that the land is available. And so if everything goes as per planned, yes, we are on target. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Simailak, the minister in the previous response mentioned that all construction, no matter who is building them are considered in these numbers, and I would like to go back to the opening comments.

There was a question earlier on anticipating another 320 building permits for new housing units to be issued. Is that 320 building permits for Nunavut Housing Corporation, or is that all in general. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All in general. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you minister. Minister, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's proposed 2025-26 capital estimates includes 10 million in affordable housing capital. For the new Nunavut Affordable Housing Supply Incentive Program, as of today what entities have expressed interest in participating in the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to name the applicants, but to say that to date we've had half a dozen applicants and companies and so forth seeking interest in looking for more information on that program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, the substantiation sheet for the program includes no figures for funding during the 2026-2027 fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years. Is this a one-time program regarding what I was just asking about? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This isn't a one-time thing. In the future years, we will be coming up with more funding for these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, do you figure it will be a year from now, two years from now you will be asking for more money? Or is it not known yet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: We're anticipating next year coming forward with more requests. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. The Nunavut Housing Corporation 2021-2022 Annual Report indicated that.

"Eligibility criteria for the homeownership programs include income testing. The adjusted household income is measured relative to a community homeownership program eligibility limit. HPIE limits are derived from Canada Mortgage and Housing housing income limits. For the Nunavut Housing Corporation's homeownership program, Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, HILs were modified to reflect actual homeownership costs across the territory. The HPIE limits have not been updated since October 2014. On April 8, 2024 the Nunavut Housing Corporation announced a modernized suite of affordable housing on homeownership support programs."

To what extent do the new programs eligibility criteria depend on the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's housing income limits? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Due to the technicality of that program, maybe I would have Mr. Devereaux respond, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Devereaux.

Mr. Devereaux: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the member for the question. We have a variety of different homeownership and rental support programs we've announced in the last three, four months. Quite a number of them we specifically, with feedback from members and other key stakeholders, we opened them up, and many of them don't have maximum incomes for eligibility.

A lot of them, for example, the down payment assistance, there will be, you know, graduated scales in terms of how much at the high end you can get 80,000. If you're high

income, maybe you only get 20,000. So a lot of the programs now, we don't have those income ceilings in terms of being eligible to qualify for some level of support.

The reference to the 2021-2022 or around not having updated, so as part of this modernization, we have updated those income limits in terms of CMHC and the actual cost of ownership, and we'll continue to do that annually or every two years, because obviously the cost for homeownership change when the prices of oil go up and insurance goes up, et cetera.

So we will update those as well, and have those. But I want to emphasize again a lot of the programs we opened up so that you would be eligible for some support regardless of income. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Devereaux. I think my last question for now is coming from opening comments. On page 5, at the very bottom it states:

"Approximately 1,000 of the Nunavut Housing Corporation almost 6,000 owned public housing units were built prior to 1980 and require extensive repairs and retrofits to bring the units in the worst conditions up to an acceptable health and safety standard."

We've all seen these small houses. Some of us probably actually lived in some of them. By today's standards, I believe they would be considered a tiny home is a new wave that's coming out there. I wondering, is the housing corporation now planning perhaps on surplus those houses, removing them from the lots and build new tiny homes maybe? Because some of those units are deplorable. Like, they are just too old, and wear and tear and whatnot. So I wonder if the corporation is looking at removing them and replacing them in a tiny home perhaps in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we're doing that, actually. Some of these units are beyond repair, and my colleague is right, they used to be nice and big at one time, but they renovate them from the inside and we go from an eight-foot ceiling to a six-foot ceiling very fast.

Those buildings, those that are still in good shape and are renovate-able are being done. But for the most part, all those old units, they will be torn down and new houses will be built on those lots. Because some of those lots are really nice lots and they are already serviceable. So that's happening.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, that's happening, for example in Rankin Inlet, they are taking those buildings down. And instead of just running a bulldozer through them and bringing them to the dump, the new program that the corporation is doing is -- I'll use Rankin Inlet as an example -- we have half a dozen of these old houses, and we've told the community, you can go to those houses, house, whatever they are, and you can remove whatever you want from there at your cost and just do it safely. And when everybody is done taking the kitchen cabinets and sheet metal roofing and siding and windows and doors, doorknobs, whatever people want to take from there, we have allowed them to do that. And then once people have taken all useable stuff from there, then we will tear them down and bring them to a disposal site.

That is happening right now, and what they are doing right now will be done across the board in all the communities, because in the community you can reuse so much of that material, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for that. I know that that was done last year here, in Iqaluit. Although people disregarded the schedule of it, and it turned into quite a bit of mayhem, Minister, so I hope you take that into consideration in future projects. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. I'm glad that's being done now, because some of those units are beyond repair.

I'm wondering when can the communities expect to see a PSA maybe saying condition rating, we're done on these houses in your community, we can not salvage it, it will be surplusd or removed. When can the communities expect to see that in -- like, let's use Baker Lake. When will that be done in Baker Lake. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your comments, Mr. Chairman, are taken. It became a bit of mayhem here, but in Rankin Inlet that didn't happen, so we learned a few things from here.

In terms of going on to the communities, as we go forward in building houses in each community, through that process the corporation is taking a look at what lots are available and what conditions these old units are in.

So our team is taking a look at those and seeing if it's better to put some of these plexes into two or three of these units' spaces. As we move forward on that, we will give ample time to the community to remove those.

So most of the stuff would happen either in spring or in the fall. We will keep the communities abreast in terms of those timelines, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister, and your officials.

Just regarding the Nunavut 3000 goal, I didn't make note of who stated it, but regardless of who builds it, they are counting every unit built towards Nunavut 3000, and I just want to clarify whether or not that includes individuals who are building their own homes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: That does, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that regardless of whether or not those individuals are in receipt of any sort of support from the Government of Nunavut to build those homes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister. Does that also include when individuals or private owners are retrofitting their own homes to add extra living space or extra units to their existing homes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If they are secondary units, we have some programs now where we have home owner interested in adding a secondary suite, or turning their housing into a duplex. And so whenever there's creating new home, that would be included in the count. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, just for clarity, does that include when individuals are not in receipt of any additional or any monetary support from the Government of Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: That would be correct. Any units being built that require a building permit was included in the Nunavut 3000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are there any options of individuals retrofitting to build units that don't require permits, and if so, are those counted in this as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of residents not requiring permits for a build, that would be a question better answered by the Community and Government Services.

But in terms of Nunavut 3000, if there is a house being built, or an apartment, if there's a door being built to house people other than what was already there, like if you're turning your one house into a duplex or building a secondary suite, or construction of new housing units, that all adds up into the Nunavut 3000 numbers, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wonder if the minister can let us know how many units, if any, have been converted from staff housing units to public housing units, and public housing units to staff housing units in the last three years, and whether or not they are also counted towards Nunavut 3000 goals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2019 there were three units turned over from staff to public housing units in Clyde River. 2020, one from Qikiqtarjuaq. Igloolik in 2021 turned one unit over. In 2022 they had three units turned over in Sanikiluaq from staff housing into public housing. In Igloolik in 2022 they turned two over. And this year we've turned two over in Pond Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just to clarify, Minister, was there any converted the opposite way from public housing to staff housing? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Yes, there was a unit that went the other way in Cambridge Bay, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister. How did these all fit into the Nunavut 3000 goals? Are they counted as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, they would have already been counted, because they're existing units. When we're talking about adding into the Nunavut 3000 plan, we're talking about new units, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is it possible to go to the Minister of Community and Government Services for a response to that earlier question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Sorry, Minister Kusugak is the witness here. When Community and Government Services is in front of us, you can make note of that question. I'm sure the minister would be happy to respond. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought there's no harm in trying. I'll switch to a question about the responses about Inuit employment and Inuit employment goals for these various builds.

Those of us who went to go for a walk through the new recovery centre heard that there are different phases where Inuit employment is higher than others.

So I wonder, Mr. Chair, if the minister could tell us about how the different phases of construction might impact Inuit employment numbers and what's being done to address that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that question, because as I said in one of my responses earlier, that it's very hard to nail the, no pun intended, to nail the number of Inuit employment on a project, because it could be very high at the start of

it, because there's a lot of Inuit working in the framing and construction part of a house. They participate in everything from bringing in material to the construction phase of the actual house. So your Inuit employment would be much higher there in that phase.

But as we move forward, during the construction stage and you get into the technical and finishing part of it, you might not have as many Inuit that are working on the electrical or the plumbing and/or the finishing. So it fluctuates in that sense.

So it may be high at the start. It may drop a bit. So because of that, it's very difficult to give the detailed numbers during the phase, and we give an actual number at the end of it.

But in this case, working with NCC, we're hoping that we'll be able to keep that level higher, as they are working with staff and going through training programs.

And we're working with the colleges in terms of getting some trades, apprentices into those programs too.

So we're really hopeful that in the case of the contracts that we are currently working on that we will be able to meet or exceed the 30 percent target. I hope that clarifies for my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: And two decimal points. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that response. I would just like to go back to the conversion of units from staff to public housing units and just make a point or a plea on behalf of current Government of Nunavut employees who are nearing retirement. I had the pleasure of attending the long-term service awards for Government of Nunavut staff last week, and there were a number of elders who were awarded for their long-term service.

I think it's really important that when we look at Nunavut 3000 that a very important part of the planning would be to focus on the conversion of staff units, where possible, to public housing units in order to show respect to employees who have dedicated decades of their life and their work to working for the people of Nunavut as well as really importantly to allow people the opportunity to retire at an early age, or at the earliest possible time, so that they can enjoy the benefits of retirement.

So that's a comment, and with that I'll conclude my time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: I think that was an excellent comment, and it saves me the trouble of raising the issue myself. I know the minister and I have had numerous issues on this topic, and I would be curious to know what type of work is being done to take a look at how the

conversion of staff housing to public housing could assist a lot of our longtime employees through their retirement. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I've had this conversation with yourself, Mr. Chairman, on a number of occasions and along with other colleagues, and members in the public out there, some of them my constituents and yours that are struggling to try to find a place to live if and when they retire. Some of them would like to retire, but they don't have the ability. And this is what the housing corporation board and the chief executive officer are looking at. It's very real.

There are some options, moving forward with the programs we do have. There are some real options that we're looking at. I'll give a couple short examples. The option of turning over the existing -- in some cases it's not possible if they're in a ten-storey apartment or whatnot, but for the most part, if individuals are in houses that could be handed over to the housing association and they continue to live in them is a possibility. That is one of the possibilities. The other possibility is having them move into lease-to-own units within housing association units.

Mr. Chairman, one thing we have to keep in mind when we talk about ensuring that retiring employees of the government go into a housing unit or into a unit of their own is that there are hundreds of people on the wait list who don't have the luxury of having a government job to provide them a home, and they have been waiting for a home in some cases for 20, 25, 30 years. So is it fair to take the individual who's retiring from the government and saying okay, Jimmy or Betty, you're going to have to wait because this retiring employee is now getting the next house on the list.

So those kind of decisions are real. It is one we are struggling to work with. But nonetheless we are trying to find a common ground to ensure that our government employees who are retiring are able to have a place that they call their own that is not government staff housing.

So there are options there, and I would love to hear, not necessarily right now, at some time from my colleagues and anybody out there who would have an idea on how we could deal with this. It's a very stressful situation, as we all go through. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister, and your staff. To the opening comments on page 5 concerning the houses that overheat, or are too moldy, sorry, how many communities have houses where molding has become a problem and cannot be occupied.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mold issue on houses that can no longer be occupied, what I can say is we have many units -- at this time we have about over 350 with mold problems that are owned by the housing corp. I just cannot say exactly how many cannot be occupied. But these have to be remediated on a yearly basis, and we're trying to increase the remediation on the units that can be remediated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair in his conclusion to the opening, I did have some comments as fall arrives when you have mold problems. I heard of a family that had to be told to get out and no longer -- recently no longer have housing, and these are things that need to be considered, especially those who are renting houses. I think first should be a unit found before they are requested to leave the house they are occupying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been looked into. In fact, in all communities we try and ensure there are units available, one or two units that could be occupied in case there's a unit that has a mold problem. So we try that venue. For example, in Naujaat there is one unit there to ensure people have homes in case of mold problems and remediation has to take place.

So the issue with not having a unit and the person to move out until the house is remediated, they will be moved to the house that has been remediated. We want them to be safe, the Nunavummiut, and because of that we want to ensure remediation take place first. In Naujaat, however, I think what happened was done a little hasty, but since then it has been resolved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for clarifying that. Moving on to Nunavut 3000. The houses that will be built are many. The construction phase and the training involved with NCC is that training program ongoing as per the agreement. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there is. We have training in construction while a building is being erected. We have that at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The construction phase in our community or constituents that have not started yet in Salliq and Naujaat as to how many will be trained.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. To date we have 40 being trained in buildings that are being constructed. And we anticipate the new buildings when they go onto construction, we anticipate another 40. And we have some idea how many will be in each community. For example, in Rankin Inlet the trade school that is being built, I believe there are ten or 12, and all the construction workers were Inuit. I believe we had Pond Inlet, Naujaat, Arviat, Qamani'tuaq, Baker Lake, and it was very great to see these activities while the construction is going on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is good news. And in Rankin Inlet who are in trade school were very pleased and very happy in their position. And with my constituents, you know, we will have a good team. So my question is in the communities, what training will there be in each individual community. That's my question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Yes, Mr. Chairman. The builders in each community will be seeking employees in each community where they built. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak. Just a moment. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regards to training and construction in our communities, the other community of my constituency, Clyde River, does the same hold true in a community; has the training gone ahead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's the same program or progress is going ahead.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's good to hear the construction, or the start of construction won't stop, now with that the accommodation or hotels that are available. That is not really there in smaller communities, so the renting of outside workers or a combination for outside workers, how that is. I know contractors consider these, but some communities just have very limited accommodations. With lack of accommodation, have you heard anything if it may be an obstacle, or is it already a barrier, and that construction may not even go ahead, due to lack of accommodation, has that been considered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you for your question. We noted that as we signed our agreement along with CCG we knew it was going to cost, especially in the area of accommodation cost, and we were going to use a lot of money just for accommodation, so we began to work together.

So we're going to have 18 units built in a year. All the communities that are visited, the modular units have been provided in communities where construction is going on. And the modular units are already there for a combination of workers, and this will alleviate the problems. And upon completion of the building, and once they leave, they will have to leave the unit with a modular unit renovated.

Whether it's a hamlet or a local housing, we consider with us what the building will be used for is going to be for employees, families, office, whatever. We were able to work with these organizations. And that's assuming the modular units are left. And if modular units are needed in another location, we will do that. And that will really elevate the problem of a combination in construction business. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now there are quite a number of people who own their own homes. Even in the smaller communities there are many homeowners. Some of them have been leaving their houses behind and go to public housing instead. So for communities that don't have people that know how to build houses, now there's going to be a bunch of constructors coming into the community, they're going to need electricians and plumbers, et cetera, and the lack of accommodations has kept a lot of people that would have gone to the community to not

go there, and this problem is getting worse all the time. Has this been looked at, like homeowners, if they can rent out their own home units for other people.

I am not criticizing the fact that they have to bring in constructors, and as the minister stated, the accommodation units will be turned over to the community either through the hamlets or other means, and the modular units that will be built. It would be good if the communities knew about this so that homeowners can prepare their units. Has there been any agreements about that. Maybe I shouldn't be asking this question. Maybe I can just say them to encourage housing corporation to start that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Yes, that's completely understandable. The people that are going to be building the houses in the communities, they look into the communities, first of all, to see if there's going to be accommodation available in a particular community. So they look into that right away, and they will be informed to check into the communities, if they need more rooms then they can look into private homeowners. I can support that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

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

Chairman: Thank you. There's a motion on the floor to report progress not subject to gait. All those in favour. Motion carried. I'll now rise to report progress to the speaker. Witnesses, you may be excused from the table.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been dealing with Bill 61 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: Is there a seconder? Minister Main. Motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.
Item 21, Second Reading of Bills. Item 22, *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for October 29:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statement
3. Members' Statement

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 Motion
15. Motions
16. First Reading of Bills; Bill 60
17. Second Reading of Bills; Bill 59
18. Consideration of Committee of the Whole and Other Matters:
 - Bill 53
 - Bill 54
 - Bill 55
 - Bill 61
19. Report of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters:
 - Bill 53
 - Bill 54
 - Bill 55
 - Bill 61
20. Report on Committee of the Whole
21. Return reading of bills
22. Orders of the day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 29 at 1:30 p.m. I remind members return to chambers for group photo. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:54*

Appendix October 28, 2024



Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts

Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Public Accounts of Nunavut

**2nd Session of the 6th Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Fall 2024 Sitting**

Chairperson

George Hickes

Co-Chairperson

Alexander Sammurtok

Members

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

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Introduction

The 2021-2022 Public Accounts were tabled in the House on November 8, 2022. The standing committee's televised hearing on the 2021-2022 Public Accounts was held on September 21, 2023. The standing committee subsequently presented its report to the House at its sitting of March 5, 2024. The Government of Nunavut's response to the standing committee's report was provided to Members prior to the September 2024 televised hearing on the 2022-2023 Public Accounts and was formally tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of October 24, 2024.

The 2022-2023 Public Accounts were tabled in the House on May 30, 2024, five months after the statutory deadline. The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the 2022-2023 Public Accounts from September 19-20, 2024.

The standing committee's hearing was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly and was televised live across the territory. The hearing was open to the public and news media to observe from the Visitors' Gallery, and was livestreamed on the Legislative Assembly's website. The transcript from the standing committee's hearing is 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. The standing committee notes its appreciation to the witnesses.



Observations and Recommendations

Issue: Requests for Additional Information

During the televised hearing, a number of requests were made for additional information to be provided to the standing committee.

Standing Committee Recommendation #1:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include the information items that were requested during the televised hearing of September 19-20, 2024.

Issue: Budgetary and Financial Management Transparency, Sustainability and Flexibility

The theme of budgetary and financial management transparency, sustainability and flexibility was highlighted on a number of occasions during the standing committee's televised hearing. This was also a major theme of the standing committee's 2023 televised hearing.

In recent years, the Government of Nunavut has expanded its financial reporting beyond the annual main/capital estimates, business plans and public accounts to include an annual "Consolidated Budget of the Government Reporting Entity" and an annual "Mid-Year Fiscal Report".

Prior to the standing committee's 2023 televised hearing, the Department of Finance provided Members with a document titled *Public Accounts at a Glance*. The standing committee is pleased to note that this publication is now publicly accessible on the website of the Department of Finance. This followed a recommendation made by the standing committee in its *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts of Nunavut*, which was presented to the House at its sitting of March 5, 2024.

On October 24, 2023, the C.D. Howe Institute released its annual *Report Card for Canada's Senior Governments*.¹ The 2023 edition was titled *The ABCs of Fiscal Accountability*. The report awarded Nunavut a C+ grade and noted that:

"Nunavut tabled its budget after the start of the fiscal year and its financial statements were not timely. It released a mid-year fiscal update, an improvement from the previous year, but its update used restated figures in its budget comparison."

It should be noted the 2022 edition of the annual report, which was titled *The Right to Know: Grading the Fiscal Transparency of Canada's Senior Governments*, awarded Nunavut a B+ grade.

Section 44 of the federal *Nunavut Act* provides that:

Submission of Territorial Accounts to Assembly
44. The Commissioner shall, on or before December 31 of each fiscal year, lay before the Assembly a report, called the Territorial Accounts, for the preceding fiscal year of Nunavut, and the Assembly shall consider the report.

¹ <https://www.cdhowe.org/public-policy-research/abcs-fiscal-accountability-report-card-canadas-senior-governments-2023>. As of October 25, 2024, the 2024 edition had not yet been published.

Section 74 of the territorial *Financial Administration Act* provides that:

Tabling of Public Accounts

74. Unless the Legislative Assembly otherwise fixes a date, the Public Accounts for the fiscal year must be laid before the Legislative Assembly on or before December 31 following the end of the fiscal year or, if the Legislative Assembly is not then in session, not later than 15 days after the commencement of the next session of the Legislative Assembly.

The dates of tabling of the Public Accounts have been as follows:

Fiscal Year	Date of Tabling in the Legislative Assembly ²
1999-2000	May 29, 2001
2000-2001	May 16, 2002
2001-2002	June 3, 2003
2002-2003	May 21, 2004
2003-2004	December 16, 2005 ³
2004-2005	January 8, 2007 ⁴
2005-2006	March 6, 2008
2006-2007	September 16, 2008
2007-2008	July 31, 2009 ⁵
2008-2009	August 27, 2010 ⁶
2009-2010	April 15, 2011 ⁷
2010-2011	December 19, 2011 ⁸
2011-2012	December 14, 2012 ⁹
2012-2013	December 13, 2013 ¹⁰
2013-2014	November 6, 2014
2014-2015	November 5, 2015
2015-2016	November 7, 2016
2016-2017	November 21, 2017
2017-2018	November 8, 2018
2018-2019	November 6, 2019
2019-2020	November 5, 2020
2020-2021	November 19, 2021
2021-2022	November 8, 2022
2022-2023	May 30, 2024
2023-2024	NOT YET TABLED

² Green = Tabled by Statutory Deadline / Red = Not Tabled by Statutory Deadline

³ Backdoor Tabled

⁴ Backdoor Tabled

⁵ Backdoor Tabled

⁶ Backdoor Tabled

⁷ Backdoor Tabled

⁸ Backdoor Tabled

⁹ Backdoor Tabled

¹⁰ Backdoor Tabled

During the standing committee's televised hearing of September 19, 2024, Office of the Auditor General witness testimony indicated that:

"The government missed the statutory financial reporting deadline. This delay was because the financial statements of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund were completed too late to meet the December 31 statutory reporting deadline for the government's financial statements. The 2022-2023 Public Accounts of Nunavut were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on May 30, 2024. Because the government missed the reporting deadline, we have issued a modified opinion on compliance with specified authorities.

We wish to draw the committee's attention to two (2) issues. The first was raised previously and involves inadequate inventory management practices and significant control deficiencies for spare parts and lubricants at the Qulliq Energy Corporation. These shortcomings matter because the lack of complete information on these inventories prevented us from concluding on whether they were accurately recorded and valued. The second issue involves the Petroleum Products Division, which required action by the government and the legislature to resolve issues with authorized limits for its two (2) funds.

On another matter, in 2022-2023, the government implemented a new accounting standard for Asset Retirement Obligations, or AROs. AROs are legal obligations for physical assets that will cost money to deal with when they stop being used. For example, the government could incur costs in the future to clean up buildings that contain asbestos.

We noted issues relating to AROs. The new standard is complex, and the government and some territorial corporations had difficulty implementing it. As a result, both the Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Nunavut Housing Corporation missed their statutory financial reporting deadlines. This in turn delayed the government's consolidation process. We would also like to remind the committee about the issue relating to AROs in the financial statements of the Nunavut Development Corporation that we brought to your attention in last year's hearing. In our 2022-2023 independent auditor's report on the corporation's financial statements, we noted that the corporation had not done the required analysis to identify future AROs."

The standing committee notes that the 2023-2024 *Ministerial Letter of Expectation* to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Qulliq Energy Corporation was tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 3, 2023. The *Ministerial Letter of Expectation* stated, in part, that:

"In the past fiscal year, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada issued a qualified opinion regarding the persistence of inadequate inventory controls. I encourage you to continue working closely with the Office of the Auditor General and management to tighten control procedures and improve financial reporting. You must develop reliable and appropriate count procedures for

your inventory to ensure accuracy and efficiency. Looking ahead to 2024-2025, I expect the Qulliq Energy Corporation to have a comprehensive plan outlining how reliable and appropriate controls are implemented throughout the corporation's inventory management system."

The standing committee notes that the 2023-2024 *Ministerial Letter of Expectation* to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Nunavut Housing Corporation was tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 3, 2023. The *Ministerial Letter of Expectation* stated, in part, that:

"The Corporation continues to implement Asset Retirement Obligations accounting standards relating to buildings that are owned by the Corporation that contain either asbestos, lead, mercury, or polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs). This standard requires public sector entities to recognize liabilities for legal obligations to incur costs associated with the retirement of tangible capital assets on their acquisition, construction, development, or through their normal use and to expense those costs systematically over the life of the asset."

Standing Committee Recommendation #2:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on the status of work to address the Office of the Auditor General's observations concerning the Qulliq Energy Corporation, the Nunavut Development Corporation and the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on the status of the preparation of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund's 2023-2024 financial statements.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on the status of staffing at the Petroleum Products Division of the Department of Community and Government Services.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed timeline for when the new Enterprise Resource Planning System ("Fusion Cloud") will be utilized by the Petroleum Products Division of the Department of Community and Government Services.

The standing committee further recommends that the Department of Finance's publication titled *Public Accounts at a Glance* be updated on a regular basis to reflect such developments as the adoption of new accounting standards.

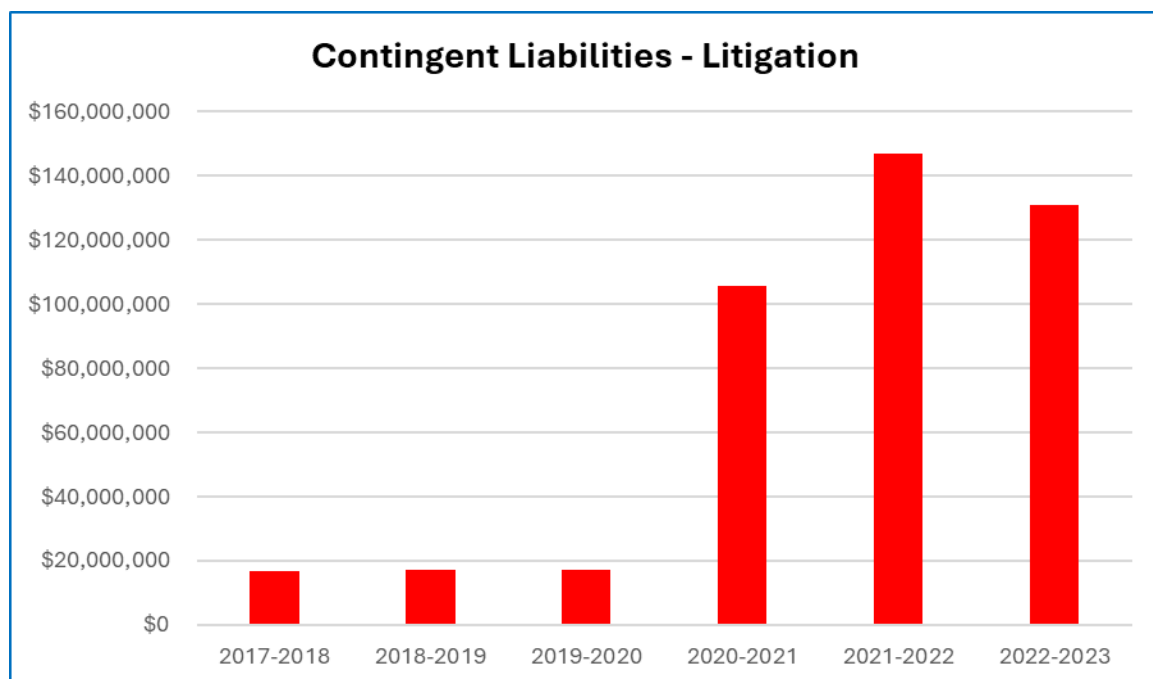
Issue: Contingent Liabilities

Note 23 on page 43 of the 2022-2023 *Public Accounts of Nunavut* indicates that:

“There are a number of claims and threatened litigation cases outstanding against the Government for which the outcomes are not determinable, including a number of cases where an amount is not specified. The nature of these claims include wrongful dismissal, breach of policy, personal injury, sexual abuse, negligence, wrongful arrest and assault. Where it is likely that there will be a future payment and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made, the Government has recorded a liability. For those pending cases, where the outcome is not determinable as at March 31 and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made, the total amount of those claims is estimated at \$130,958,000 (2021-2022 - \$146,775,000). No liability has been recorded for these claims as the outcome of these cases is not determinable.”

This amount has increased significantly over time and there is little public disclosure concerning the specific matters.

The standing committee recognizes that the annual Public Accounts did not include a specific dollar value for this category of liability until the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The amount has changed as follows:



During the standing committee's televised hearing of September 21, 2023, Government of Nunavut witness testimony indicated that:

"It's a tricky balance between disclosure and not putting information out there that could be harmful to the government when it comes to litigation. Obviously, we can't list individual claims and what were estimated as liabilities because that would give parties on the other side an idea of what we think our risk exposure is.

While I appreciate that jurisdictions such as Ontario do into these categories break down a little bit further, they may have hundreds of thousands of litigations in there, whereas if I started to break some of ours down and do four or five categories, I might have one or two litigations in a category. I guess the risk is if we get too specific because of the limited number of claims we might have in a category. We could still be disclosing information we don't want to, to other parties to the litigation just by virtue of the limited number of claims we have.

It's certainly something we could discuss with the Department of Justice as far as how much additional disclosure we could give without compromising our legal position. That's certainly a discussion item that we would be willing to have, but I do know one or two contracts that might be in dispute could have a significant impact on our balance. While amounts may look like they're growing, it may not be that there is tons of additional litigation; it could just be one or two large contracts that are impacting our liabilities. It's certainly something that we would be willing to look at and discuss with Justice, but I would caution that there's only so far we can go just because of the limited number of cases we may have at any one time."

The standing committee subsequently recommended in its *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts of Nunavut*, which was presented to the House at its sitting of March 5, 2024, that the government:

"provide a detailed update on the status of the review undertaken by the Department of Finance and the Department of Justice concerning the disclosure of contingent liabilities in the annual Public Accounts."

The government's response to the standing committee's *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts of Nunavut* indicated that the Department of Finance has:

"discussed additional disclosure with the Department of Justice related to legal contingent liabilities. On the advice of Justice, the GN should not provide legal contingent liability assessments on individual matters within the disclosure."

During the standing committee's televised hearing of September 19, 2024, Government of Nunavut witness testimony indicated that:

"we will work with the Department of Justice and see if there's any way we can provide more information without giving away too much sensitive information.

Part of the issue, just so all the listeners are aware, is that a lot of the contingent liabilities that we record have to do with whether or not we think we're in a strong position and how much we might have to pay out if we were to lose those challenges. The obvious problem with giving that information out is that it shows our position publicly to someone who might be challenging us in court. With respect to the number or the total value of the contingent liability growing, I can confirm that that is not necessarily reflective of the volume of challenges. There are some large ones in there that are really skewing the total pot, and once those are dealt with I suspect that it will return to levels that we've seen in the past."

Standing Committee Recommendation #3:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the status of the review undertaken by the Department of Finance and the Department of Justice concerning the disclosure of contingent liabilities in the annual Public Accounts.

Issue: Risks, Uncertainties and Climate Change

The 2022-2023 Public Accounts indicates that one of the most “significant risks and uncertainties” to which the Government of Nunavut is exposed are the:

“Unknown effects of climate change (e.g. infrastructure damage, natural resource development, water shortages, etc.).”

The government’s response to the standing committee’s *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts of Nunavut* indicated that:

“In 2018, the Auditor General of Canada found that the Government of Nunavut had identified potential climate-related risks but had not ranked or analyzed risks based on their impacts. The [Climate Change] Secretariat is about to commence the 3rd year of our GN-wide Risk and Resiliency Assessment. This project is a direct result of the recommendations made by the Auditor General. We anticipate this work to wrap up in this current fiscal year. We will then be working more directly with each GN department to help them address gaps identified in our assessment.

This work is imperative to develop a Nunavut adaptation action plan as we move forward. To address these challenges, the Secretariat is developing a method of assessing climate change risks and building resilience. This multi-year project aims to improve the management of climate-related risks within the Government of Nunavut and integrate the findings into existing and new government management and planning processes, including risk management and emergency protocols.”

Standing Committee Recommendation #4:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut’s response to this report provides a detailed update on the Department of Finance and the Department of Environment’s work to date to address the issue of risks associated with the impact of climate change, including work to quantify the financial impact of climate change for the purpose of including a dollar value in the annual Public Accounts.

Issue: New Accounting Standards and Tangible Capital Assets

Information provided by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada indicates that:

“We wish to highlight the following new accounting standards, which could affect the government’s consolidated financial statements in future years:

- PS 3450-Financial Instruments (effective April 1, 2022)
- PS 3280-Asset Retirement Obligations (effective April 1, 2022)
- PS 3400-Revenue (effective April 1, 2023)”

Information provided by the Office also indicates that “PS 3160-Public Private Partnerships became effective on April 1, 2023.”

These standards are approved by the Public Sector Accounting Board, which is an “independent body created to serve the public interest by developing accounting standards for the public sector.”¹¹

Note 2 on page 32 of the 2022-2023 *Public Accounts of Nunavut* indicates that:

“A number of new and amended standards and guidance issued by the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada are not yet effective and have not been applied in preparing these consolidated financial statements. The Government will adopt these new and amended standards and guidance on their effective dates. The Government is currently assessing the impact they will have on its consolidated financial statements. The following standards for governments will become effective as follows:

PS 3400 Revenue (effective April 1, 2023), a new section establishing standards on how to account for and report on revenue, differentiating between revenue arising from transactions that include performance obligations and transactions that do not have performance obligations.

PS 1202 Financial Statement Presentation (effective April 1, 2026), defines how financial statement information is presented. Key changes include removal of the statement of change in net financial assets or net debt and the addition of a new statement of net assets or net liabilities and how this amount is determined.”

Government of Nunavut witness testimony provided to the standing committee during its September 21, 2023, televised hearing indicated that:

¹¹ <https://www.frascanada.ca/en/psab/about>

“Regarding asset retirement obligations, the Department of Finance is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the new accounting standard. This process involves educating departments and public agencies on the requirements of the new standard and then working with them on plans and approach to ensure they are able to gather the necessary information to allow for appropriate reporting under the new standard. As this is a new and complex standard, governments and auditors across the country have found it challenging to find the right balance of information-gathering and reporting to satisfy the standard.”

Government of Nunavut witness testimony provided to the standing committee during its September 19, 2024, televised hearing indicated that:

“We’ve also been successful in implementing all of the new standards that come about this year, specifically the one mentioned in the opening comments. And we are on track to table on time for this current fiscal year.”

The *Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis* section of the 2022-2023 Public Accounts indicates on page 13 that:

“The Government of Nunavut ratio of net book value to total cost of tangible capital assets declined in the current period indicating assets are getting older. As assets get older, repairs and maintenance costs increase which results in less funds available for other programs and services. The aging tangible capital asset base also presents a risk to future programs and service delivery as assets become less reliable and the potential for failure increases. The Government of Nunavut is aware of the challenges presented by an aging asset base and continues to actively monitor asset conditions and invest in its tangible capital assets.”

The standing committee notes with concern the implications of this trend in respect to insurance coverage for buildings and major assets.

Note 3 on page 33 of the 2022-2023 Public Accounts includes detailed information concerning “the effect of the adoption of PS 3280-Asset Retirement Obligations.” This information included restated figures in a number of areas.

Information on pages 9, 46 and 47 of the 2022-2023 Public Accounts indicates that \$153,512,000 was classified as an “expense” related to the amortization of tangible capital assets during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Standing Committee Recommendation #4:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the status of its work to implement new accounting standards that have been approved by the Public Sector Accounting Board and which came into effect, or are scheduled to come into effect, on or after April 1, 2022.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of its current portfolio of tangible capital assets and a detailed clarification as to how the amount of \$153,512,000 in "amortization of tangible capital assets" that is referenced on pages 9, 46 and 47 of the 2022-2023 *Public Accounts of Nunavut* was calculated.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed timeline for when enhanced disclosure of fully amortized tangible capital assets will be integrated into the annual Public Accounts.

Issue: Activities of the Contaminated Sites Liabilities Working Group

Note 13 on page 36 of the 2022-2023 Public Accounts indicates that:

“The Government recognizes that there are costs related to the remediation of environmentally contaminated sites for which it is responsible. As of March 31, 2023, there were 6 sites (2022 - 6), 2 storage tank farms (2022 - 2) and 4 waste sites (2022 - 4) identified as requiring environmental remediation. In addition to the number of sites disclosed above, Nunavut Housing Corporation has also recognized costs related to the remediation of 3 sites (2022 - 11) contaminated as a result of oil spills. Qulliq Energy Corporation has recognized costs related to 3 sites (2022 - 4) resulting from oil spills at the Corporation's power plants.

For those sites where the Government of Nunavut expects to give up future economic benefits due to a legal order or plans to remediate contamination (e.g., due to the risk to human health), and is responsible or has accepted responsibility for remediation, and a reasonable estimate can be determined for remediation costs, a liability has been recorded in these consolidated financial statements. Where remediation costs have been estimated and a liability has been recorded, the methodology used to estimate the liability is either based on third party analyses or extrapolated from costs previously incurred to remediate, monitor, or manage sites of similar size and contamination.

The Government has identified an additional 73 sites (2022 - 73) on Commissioner's land for which liabilities for contamination may exist for assessment, remediation and monitoring.”

The Department of Environment is responsible for the administration of the government's *Contaminated Sites Policy*. The policy provides that:

“The Government of Nunavut prepares its financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for Governments as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada. *PS 3260 – Liability for Contaminated Sites* provides guidance on the recognition and measurement of liabilities for contaminated sites.”

The policy establishes a Contaminated Sites Liabilities Working Group, as well as providing for management of the Government of Nunavut Contaminated Sites Database.

The Government of Nunavut's response to the standing committee's *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts* indicated that one of the activities of the Contaminated Sites Liability Working Group has been to develop a “responsibility matrix”, which is described as being “a tool to provide a defensible way to accept or reject responsibility for liabilities.”

Standing Committee Recommendation #5:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the activities of the Contaminated Sites Liabilities Working Group for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 (to date) fiscal years.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed description of how *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* is integrated into the work of the Contaminated Sites Liabilities Working Group.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the timeline for making the Government of Nunavut Contaminated Sites Database accessible to the public.

Issue: Comptrollership Branch Priorities and Activities

The Department of Finance's annual business plans indicate that the Financial Reporting and Controls Division of the Comptrollership Branch is "accountable for the preparation and publication of the annual Public Accounts, as required by the *Financial Administration Act*."

Testimony provided by the Office of the Auditor General during the standing committee's televised hearing of September 21, 2023, indicated that:

"Our office has noticed that certain government departments and territorial corporations have experienced high levels of employee turnover and vacancies in key positions, which further increased during the pandemic. As a result, the high level of vacancies inherently increases the risk of fraud or error as it can lead to deficiencies within the internal control environment and have an impact on the successful delivery of programs. We believe this is an important root cause underlying many observations we also reported in our recent performance audits. Governmental representatives have indicated that challenges in securing staff housing can have a significant impact on the ability to attract potential candidates."

Testimony provided by the Office of the Auditor General during the standing committee's televised hearing of September 19, 2024, indicated that:

"We continue to notice that certain government departments and territorial corporations have experienced high levels of employee turnover and vacancies in key positions. The high level of vacancies inherently increases the risk of errors in financial reporting because it can lead to deficiencies in the internal control environment."

The standing committee shares this concern. The Government of Nunavut's most recently-published quarterly employment report indicated that there was a government-wide vacancy rate of 35.1% as of June 30, 2024. The Department of Finance's vacancy rate was 35.7%.

The standing committee recognizes that the Department of Human Resources' annual business plans have indicated that one of its priorities has been to finalize a new *Human Resource Strategy*. The *2019-2023 Human Resource Strategy* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2020.

The department's annual business plans indicate that its priorities for the 2022-2023 fiscal year were to:

- "Collaborate with all departments to develop a comprehensive Accounts Receivable collection strategy;

- In collaboration with the Department of Health, develop an employee survey for employee medical travel to help improve effective delivery of the benefit and to reduce controllable expenses;
- Roll out the Financial Management Development Program;
- Procure an Enterprise Resource Planning system;
- Implement an electronic signature system for the Government of Nunavut;
- Review and revise the Government of Nunavut's approach to honoraria payments under Financial Administration Manual Directive 810: Honoraria;
- Update the Government of Nunavut's approach to grants and contributions, through a review of Financial Administration Manual Directive 801: Grants and Contributions; and
- Conduct an operational review of the Internal Audit Division and its functions."

The department's annual business plans indicate that its priorities for the 2023-2024 fiscal year were to:

- "Develop a strategy to link existing public service training with financial management training activities;
- In consultation with the Department of Health, develop an employee survey for employee medical travel to guide improvements in program delivery;
- Initiate GN-wide review of Specimen Signature records;
- Develop a program to support professional finance and accounting designations for new and existing employees across government; and
- Roll out the Enterprise Resource Planning system with increasing focus on training, testing, design, and implementation."

On July 24, 2023, the Department of Finance issued *Request for Proposals 2023-42: Financial Reporting and Auditing Services - Assistance with the Public Accounts and Internal Audits*. The RFP closed on August 25, 2023. On December 8, 2023, the department issued its Award List, which included four proponents.

The department's annual business plans indicate that its priorities for the 2024-2025 fiscal year have been to:

- Implement core modules and priority functions of the Enterprise Resource Planning platform, and begin transition towards long-term operations ("sustainment").
- Explore opportunities to expand e-commerce and payment methods.

The department's annual business plans indicate that its priorities for the 2025-2026 fiscal year (prior to dissolution of the 6th Legislative Assembly) will be to:

- Implement pay-related modules and functions of the Government's new system, and other remaining modules and functions.
- Undertake an internal assessment of improvements to the GN's overall financial capacity since the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning platform.

The Department of Finance's recent business plans have indicated that one of the Comptrollership Branch's priorities has been to "collaborate with all departments to develop a comprehensive Accounts Receivable collection strategy."

The Government of Nunavut's response to the standing committee's *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts* indicated that "the Accounts Receivable Working Group was re-established."

Standing Committee Recommendation #6:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the status of the Comptrollership Branch's work to implement business plan priorities for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on the activities of the Accounts Receivable Working Group.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed breakdown of accounts receivable as listed in the 2022-2023 Public Accounts in a format that is comparable to that which was included in the Government of Nunavut's response to the standing committee's *Report on the Review of the 2021-2022 Public Accounts*.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on work performed to date by proponents pursuant to *Request for Proposals 2023-42: Financial Reporting and Auditing Services - Assistance with the Public Accounts and Internal Audits*.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed list of internal audits undertaken during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 fiscal years, and that this list include a summary of significant actions undertaken in response to the findings of each audit.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of the employment status of all positions in the Department of Finance's Comptrollership Branch.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the status of the development of the *2024-2028 Human Resource Strategy* in respect to the recruitment and retention of financial management professionals.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, the standing committee looks forward to holding a televised hearing during the spring of 2025 on the 2023-2024 Public Accounts. This hearing is anticipated to allow for detailed consideration of a number of emerging issues and themes, including:

- Administration of the government's *Treasury Management Policy* and *Investment Regulations*;
- Human resources capacity and recruitment strategies to address vacant financial management positions in the Government of Nunavut;
- Implementation of the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada's new standard (PS 3160) concerning Public-Private Partnerships (P3s);
- Results of audits of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund and the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund;
- Enhancement of transparency in respect to reporting of territorial tax revenues associated with the natural resources extractive sector;
- Enhancement of transparency in respect to reporting of carbon tax revenues;
- Impact of the recently-signed *Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement* on reporting of territorial royalty revenues and liabilities in respect to contaminated sites;
- Administration of departmental grants and contributions, including updates to *Financial Administration Manual Directive 801*; and
- Expansion of the range of electronic formats in which the Government of Nunavut's financial reporting publications and data are made publicly available and achievement of greater alignment of, and consistency between, figures and formats in the Public Accounts and other publications, including annual reports on grants and contributions expenditures, contracting, procurement and leasing activities.

