



**Legislative Assembly of Nunavut**

**Speaker**

**Hon. Tony Akoak**  
(Gjoa Haven)

**Hon. David Akeeagok**  
(Quttiktuq)

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok**  
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council; Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister of Languages*

**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)  
*Deputy Speaker; Chair of the Committee of the Whole*

**Hon. David Joanasic**  
(South Baffin)  
*Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy*

**Joelie Kaernerik**  
(Amittuq)

**Mary Killiktee**  
(Uqqummiut)

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak**  
(Rankin Inlet South)  
*Minister of Finance; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Commission; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Board*

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

**Karen Nutarak**  
(Tununiq)

**Daniel Qavvik**  
(Hudson Bay)

**Joanna Quassa**  
(Aggu)

**Inagayuk Quqqiaq**  
(Netsilik)

**Alexander Sammurtok**  
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

**Joe Savikataaq**  
(Arviat South)

*Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole*

**Craig Simailak**  
(Baker Lake)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Friday, February 21, 2025**

**Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickeys, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaernerck, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 09:01*

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): Good morning. Before proceeding, Ms. Killiktee please open the meeting with prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker's Statement**

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good morning, Inuit, to our meeting, and those listening on the radio, TV, welcome. (interpretation ends) Item 2, Ministers' Statements. Hon. House Leader, Mr. Joanasie.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 520 - 6(2): Ministers' Absence from the House**

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that the Hon. Lorne Kusugak and the Hon. Margaret Nakasuk will be absent from the House today, due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister's Statement. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 521 - 6(2) Council of the Federation Mission to Washington**

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Mr. Speaker, before I proceed, it's great to be a Canadian. Yesterday in the hockey game, Canada won. I think we were all very proud everywhere in Canada.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update on the Council of the Federation February 2025 mission to the United States to advocate for stronger ties between our neighbouring countries.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time ever, all 13 of Canada's premiers travelled to Washington, DC during the week of February 10 to send a message to the newly elected administration and other American politicians that tariffs on Canadian goods would hurt workers and businesses on both sides of the border. We had met with bipartisan Members of Congress and American and Canadian business and labour leaders. We were also invited to the White House to meet with senior advisors to President Trump.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note that my colleagues from the Northwest Territories Premier Simpson and Yukon's Premier Pillai and I once again worked as a united front to put Canada's north's interest and perspective on the national agenda.

Following the official Council of the Federation's meetings, the northern premiers attended several joint engagements to deliver a unified message for a strong and thriving Arctic and the north.

Mr. Speaker, as northern leaders, we stressed that a strong Canada-U.S. partnership is essential to addressing shared priorities: From economic growth to energy security, critical mineral supplies and border security, our collaboration is key to navigate these emerging challenges.

This commitment was further reinforced during the presentation at the Wilson Center, where we highlighted the importance of Arctic security and the opportunities for alignment and cooperation between Canada and the United States in the Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, one of highlights of our trip was meeting with our officials from Denmark and Greenland. Now more than ever, we are aligned and allied with Greenland on key Arctic issues, including security, climate change and potential economic partnership.

One of the reoccurring themes in my engagements in Washington was the need for investments in nation-building that could unlock Nunavut's critical mineral and energy potential. Through strategic partnerships with Inuit organizations and sustainability development, we could put Nunavut on the map both as a trusted partner and as a sound investment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my northern colleagues and I reiterated the message that we are committed to Canada's sovereignty and that we will continue to prioritize security of the north, which includes Arctic energy and economic security.

Northern premiers will stand together with other Canadian first ministers to protect and strengthen our economy and together as Canadians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*



**Speaker:** Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

**Minister's Statement 522 - 6(2): Qulliq Energy Corporation Strategic Direction Update**

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update to Qulliq Energy Corporation's new strategic direction. QEC has revised its mission, vision, and value statements to better reflect our purpose and commitment to Nunavut communities. This initiative was driven by the need to modernize QEC's corporate strategy and ensure alignment with industry best practices, community needs, and Inuit Qaujimagatunqangit.

Through these updates the corporation will prioritize employees' success, operational excellence, sustainability and innovation. These changes also position QEC for increased collaboration and stronger connections with communities and stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the QEC's corporate affairs team played a key role in this initiative by gathering employee and customer feedback. Based on employee and stakeholder feedback, the new mission, vision and value statements are supported by three pillars which we refer to as the three Es.

Firstly, Elevate: A focus on employees, by fostering a work place where staff feel heard, valued and equipped with the tools they need, including skill development, career growth, and recognition.

Secondly, Energize: Focussing on operational excellence by driving efficiency, continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making to align operational processes with corporate goals.

And finally, Evolve: A focus on innovation through sustainability energy solutions, technological advancements, participation in research projects, and strategic partnerships to drive progress.

Mr. Speaker, QEC's revised mission now states "to provide comfort and warmth to our communities by delivering reliable and responsible energy in Canada's true north."

To support these changes we have launched QEC Connect, a new monthly town hall aimed at fostering connectivity and collaboration among employees.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing the positive impacts of QEC's renewed strategic direction as we continue to serve Nunavummiut through providing safe, reliable and sustainable energy.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker:** Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeegok.

**Minister's Statement 523 - 6(2): Constable Inuuki Burke**

**Hon. David Akeegok** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride and to share with you an important milestone for Nunavummiut and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. On January 6, 2025 Constable Inuuki Burke was officially sworn in as a regular member of the RCMP. This momentous occasion marks the first time in over 20 years that a Nunavut Inuk has achieved this honour.

Constable Burke began his rigorous training at Depot, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's esteemed training academy on July 1, 2024. His journey through Depot was defined by his dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment to serve. His graduation ceremony was a proud moment for Nunavut and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police alike.

>> *Applause*

Premier of Nunavut PJ Akeegok and myself as Justice Minister were honoured to attend the ceremony, along with the RCMP 'V' Division's chief superintendent Andrew Blackadar, Staff Sergeant Major Pauline Melanson and Corporal George Henrie. This strong representation underscores the significance of Constable Burke's achievement not only for himself, his family and his community, but for our entire territory.

Constable Burke has now returned to serve his home territory proudly, posted at Cambridge Bay detachment. His presence strengthens our local policing efforts and serves as an inspiration to young Nunavummiut who may aspire to follow in his footsteps.

While at Depot the premier and I had the opportunity to tour the training academy, where we observed innovative training methods, particularly in de-escalation techniques. We also advocated for greater inclusion of Inuit culture within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police training.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has committed to this initiative by enhancing Inuit cultural representation in a shared cadet cultural space, and exploring ways to introduce Inuit elders to cadets, fostering deeper cultural understanding and respect.

Mr. Speaker, Constable Burke's achievement is a testament to the strength, resilience and potential of our people. It is a proud day for Nunavummiut and a shining example of contributions that Nunavummiut continue to make towards the safety and well-being of our community and our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

### **Item 3: Members' Statements**

#### **Member's Statement 709 - 6(2): Birthday Greetings to Grandchild**

**Ms. Killiktee:** Mr. Speaker, this morning I would just like to recognize my grandchild, the youngest, who's just a year old now whom I call Ikaluk (ph), my elder. I like my grandchild to have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister's Statement. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

#### **Member's Statement 710 - 6(2): Inuit Child First Initiative**

**Mr. Sammurtok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Before I make my member statement I would like to wish my wife happy anniversary.

>> *Applause*

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address concerns respecting the potential loss of the federal government's Inuit Child First Initiative, which has provided significant funding to support the health and well-being of children, youth, and families across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that many of my colleagues share my concern about the future of this federal program. I am equally concerned that many leaders of the excellent groups and programs across Nunavut's community have shared their concern with my fellow MLAs as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight two programs which have been doing tremendously positive work in Rankin Inlet with funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the hamlet of Rankin Inlet has been running a very successful food security program with the funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative. Children up to the age every 18 receive money and support to buy nutritious food, while children under the age of three can also receive money for diaper supplies. Over 1,000 Inuit youth in the community are better fed and looking healthier day by day, thanks to this program.

Mr. Speaker, the early years program has been providing essential support to children in more than 560 families across the communities of Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Nauyasat, and Baker Lake. Inuit staff visit new mothers and babies, give out emergency food hampers, deliver household support packages, and even provide transportation to help families to access essential support in their communities.

Without ongoing funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative programs like these, programs like these will struggle to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask to complete my statement. Thank you.

**Speaker:** The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Mr. Sammurtok.

**Mr. Sammurtok** (interpretation): Thank you, my colleagues. (interpretation ends) Without ongoing funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative programs, programs like these will struggle to continue. I urge our government leaders to communicate with their federal colleagues on the need to continue this important program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker:** Member's Statement. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

### **Member's Statement 711 - 6(2): Baker Lake High School Staff Positions**

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good morning, premier and people of Nunavut. Have a good day.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concerns respecting ongoing opportunities to provide quality educational programming at Baker Lake's high school. Mr. Speaker, Nunavut's *Education Act* provides that every child over the age of five and under the age of 21 who is a Canadian citizen or is lawfully admitted to Canada is

entitled to attend school and to have access to the education program in a regular instructional setting.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that communities should be significantly involved in the education of their children, and in an effort to provide a quality education for the children of our community, the Baker Lake District Education Authority has accessed funds from the Inuit Child First Initiative to provide additional educational programming at the Baker Lake high school.

Mr. Speaker, the educators employed to deliver these Inuit Child First-funded programs do not receive the same benefits and training as full-time indeterminant employees. During the recent professional development week, employees under the Nunavut Teachers Association were thrown out of the community flown out of the community to receive training.

Individuals hired with these funds accessed through the Inuit Child First Initiative did not have the same opportunity. This is very unfortunate, because they could also benefit from professional development training.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a very real concern that these individuals may no longer be able to continue working in the school if the Inuit Child First Initiative funding is no longer available. I strongly urge the Department of Education to step in and ensure that school programs delivered by educators hired with these funds from the Inuit Child First Initiative will continue to be supported in the school system after March 31, 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Member's Statement. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

### **Member's Statement 712 - 6(2): Gratitude to Arctic Fresh**

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good day, my colleagues, and people of Nunavut and the people of Igloolik.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to extend my gratitude because I think we all know that after Christmas it becomes hard to purchase food from the retail outlets. Arctic Fresh, a company based out of Igloolik, has helped us greatly by giving us hampers. The Arctic Bay, Cape Dorset, Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Sanirajak, Igloolik, Kimmirut, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Qikiqtarjuaq and Resolute Bay and Iqaluit were given hampers by Arctic Fresh. They were nutritious foods that were given out to all households, and I thank them greatly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Member's Statement. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

**Member's Statement 713 - 6(2): Gratitude to OLA - Mace Tour**

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning my husband was very happy when the Canadian team won the hockey game, and it will be a good day today. I will try to have a good day because of the win.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you and extend my gratitude for the visit you made to our community during the time that the Mace tour was happening. Very good information was given out to the people of Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River, and we extend our huge gratitude to the speaker and to the staff. They also visited the staff with the Mace and it's something that we're very proud of. I thank you, Mr. Speaker and staff. You also explained the Mace during that tour.

And especially I would like to thank the Commissioner of Nunavut for participating in that tour and visiting our communities of Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq. We were very proud when she handed awards to the deserving people. It was a very informative tour, and it has also, there's more understanding of how and what the Mace's purpose is. Thank you.

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

**Member's Statement 714 - 6(2): Congratulations to Inuuki Burke**

**Hon. Pamela Gross** (interpretation): *Quana*, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to everybody. Happy birthday to our colleague's granddaughter, and happy anniversary to our colleague and his wife.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to echo the congratulations by our colleague the Minister of Justice for the recent graduation of the young fine Inuk who is posted in Cambridge Bay. I had the pleasure of meeting Corporal Burke in Cambridge Bay when I was last home, and I wish him all the best in his career. Thank you for inspiring other young Inuit to go further with this career choice, and I wish you all the best as you journey through life as an RCMP officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker:** Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hicke.

**Item 6: Oral Questions****Oral Question 1064 - 6(2): Vacant Staff Housing in Iqaluit**

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, staff housing has been a consistent issue with recruitment and retention of Government of Nunavut staff and my first question is how many vacant staff units are available here in Iqaluit. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. There are a number of vacant housing units. However, with the recent fire that happened in Iqaluit, the number of staff housing units is pushed to support those people that tragically went through that incident. So right now we're working to just accommodate those and waiting for more to come on line. So I don't believe at the moment there are too many.

There are 16 staff housing units, and that's what we have right now. And we look forward to more coming on the line. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the minister's response it was stated that there was anticipation of more units coming on line. How many units, and when are those units anticipated to come on line; and if I may add are those going to be purchased and owned units or leased units? 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. I do know that the number of units that are coming on line will be leased for now. To the specific number of units, I'll have to get back to you with that number, but I believe it is two apartment buildings. But the total number we have to talk to the housing corporation. So I'll get back to the member on that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned the devastating fire that happened recently here in Iqaluit and three dozen families were displaced. I know that would have had a major impact on housing allocation process.

My next question, Mr. Speaker, how many job actions have been delayed or cancelled due to the having to relocate current staff into new units from that fire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, we are working to post job actions to go out without housing given the circumstances. However, we do know that a number of units will be coming on line and I believe that number is 50 units that will be coming out from housing corporation over the next few years, which will significantly help improve the staff housing situation and provide more opportunity for staff housing with positions in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Oral Questions. Member from Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

### **Oral Question 1065 - 6(2): Kugluktuk Power Plant**

**Mr. Anavilok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today are for the Minister of Qulliq Energy Corporation. Mr. Speaker I wanted to revisit the issue of Kugluktuk's power plant whether I raise this had issue during the recent Fall Sitting the Minister confirmed that the Qulliq Energy Corporation had "signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kitikmeot corporation outlining our collaboration and approach to the power plant construction."

Will the minister commit to tabling a copy of the memorandum of understanding to the Legislative Assembly by the end of our current winter sitting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can certainly commit to seeking direction, whether that would be permissible. Given that this is a matter dealing with a private company, I don't want to commit to divulging information that might negatively impact the work of the Kitikmeot corporation. The member and I have spoken on this topic a number of times. I met with the mayor of Kugluktuk. Qulliq Energy Corporation is very much wanting this project to proceed, and these negotiations to succeed and so I can commit to seeking direction on whether that can be tabled, and if it can be tabled I will. And if it can't, I will follow up with the member directly. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

**Mr. Anavilok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that. When I raised the issue of Kugluktuk's power plant during the recent Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Minister stated that "there are huge supply chain issues right now, and so in terms of a new generator, if you pay for it today you can expect to receive the new generator three years in the future."



Mr. Speaker, Kugluktuk's current power plant was constructed during the late 1960s. It has been in operation for over half a century. Mr. Speaker, I recognize and understand that Kugluktuk's new power plant cannot be constructed overnight. Can the minister provide a clear timeline today for when construction of the new power plant will begin. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for his questions as well. (interpretation ends) The timeline at this point is difficult to nail down. There's a number of different scenarios that could play out. My timeline is as soon as possible. We want to see this power plant built. We want to replace that aged infrastructure in the community very badly.

I'm not trying to escape the question. At this point it really depends on a number of different factors: Who the successful contractor is could significantly impact the timelines, but we are continuing the work with Kitikmeot corporation while keeping a very close eye on the potential impact of retaliatory tariffs on imports.

QEQ depends quite heavily on imports of equipment and supplies, and we are concerned about the ongoing uncertainty regarding supply chains in North America and the issue of tariffs and retaliatory tariffs. So as soon as I have a tighter timeline or a nailed down timeline, I'll be sure to share that with the community, including the MLA. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

**Mr. Anavilok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your response. (interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's original plan was to construct a new hybrid solar diesel power plant in Kugluktuk. This plan was cancelled due to the cost of building such a plant.

Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that the Qulliq Energy Corporation has been working with a private sector company to develop a hydroelectric project near the capital City of Iqaluit. It has been estimate that had this project may cost over half a billion dollars, to benefit a single community of fewer than 10,000 residents. Can the Minister indicate if he is willing to go back to the federal government to request additional support so that smaller communities like Kugluktuk can also have more environmentally sustainable power plants. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) So with regards to the hydro project here in Iqaluit, that's being led by Nunavut Nukkiksautiit

Corporation, and Qulliq Energy Corporation is engaged with them. Now, we're meeting with them regularly and we're, you know, very interested in the project. I just wanted to clarify that we're not signed up as one of the project proponents. It's being lead by Nukkiksautiit, and we're engaged with them and interested in opportunities and how we can support.

With regards to federal support, absolutely. I thank the member for raising this. We've made clear to our federal, to multiple federal agencies that we do need additional supports to move projects forward, not just Kugluktuk's, but there are a number of other communities who are operating power plants who have power plants well beyond their life span and we've explained to the federal officials that we've engaged with – yes, diesel – new diesel plants are a stepping stone to integrating renewable energy.

So in Kugluktuk's example, if somebody wants to set up a solar panel installation or a wind turbine, if we try and plug that into our existing infrastructure, it's going to be difficult just because of the age of the facility and the control, the equipment that controls the integration of different power sources.

But if we were to have a new state-of-the-art power plant in Kugluktuk, which is what we want, it would be much easier to integrate that renewable power into the community's grid. And so we've been explaining new diesel power plants as a bit of stepping stone towards more renewable energy, which we do support seeing in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1066 - 6(2): Wastewater Drug Testing**

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You caught me with my pencil in hand. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear the Minister say yesterday that his department is considering conducting wastewater testing to detect drug use in our communities. As the minister will recall, I've asked about this topic on a number of occasions and it's gratifying to see the idea gaining some traction.

As the minister will be aware, the Canadian wastewater survey measures levels of drug residues in seven major cities across Canada. Can the minister clarify whether the city of Iqaluit's wastewater drug testing program will follow the same protocols as the Canada-wide survey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for raising this issue. We are concerned about opioid misuse and overdoses

in Nunavut. They have been recorded in some communities. And it's not just opioids, it could be other drugs that are the concern.

Right now we don't have a systematic method to detect the prevalence or to understand the prevalence of use of different types of drugs in Nunavut. You know, we're getting anecdotal reports. For example, patients visiting the emergency department; you know, some suspicion of Fentanyl circulation and we do liaise with our colleagues with the Department of Justice and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as the Coroner's office.

So at this point it's still too early to say what exact methodology the wastewater testing for drugs would follow, but it's safe to say that we would be looking closely at existing programs and looking to use similar methodologies to detect this. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that response. It flows nicely into my follow-up question here, Mr. Speaker. It's common knowledge that Iqaluit is facing a growing problem with hard drugs. There have been a number of recent RCMP seizures of large quantities of cocaine and crack cocaine. However, other illicit drugs as the minister mentioned, including opioids, methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs, are most certainly circulating as well.

And last March, during the minister's appearance during Committee of the Whole, his officials indicated that the department was working on enhancing its Meditech system to gather more information with respect to the kinds of substances that might be involved in such incidences as overdoses.

And Mr. Speaker, measuring drug levels in wastewater can complement the other sources of data that Meditech may be capturing, for example, deaths due to drugs and drug-seizure data.

I'm wondering if the minister can elaborate a little bit more on his response just now, and can he provide an update on what progress has been made in tracking and monitoring the possible use of illicit hard drugs resulting in such critical health incidences such as overdoses, psychotic episodes, or cases of severe withdrawal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) We continue to make efforts on several fronts. One front that the member has raised is around tracking and understanding the prevalence of these types of issues, and I don't have additional detail in front of me in terms of the Meditech aspect, but I can say through the chief public health officer there is ongoing efforts.

The other aspect that we're working on is around awareness and helping Nunavummiut to understand the risks. You know, if you're going to use a drug, say for example cocaine, that, you know, trying to educate Nunavummiut that cocaine or whatever substance it is, could be contaminated with something that could kill you or lead to very severe reaction.

Along those lines we do have nasal naloxone kits. We stock them in all health centres. We're working with pharmacy services to make them available to the public without a prescription. So similar to other public health aids, such as contraception, trying to make it as easy for the public to access as possible.

We have started an addiction and mental health clinic in Iqaluit, where clients living with addiction have access to various supports including withdrawal and overdose services.  
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will say that on Friday, March 1, the Minister did indicate that upon my questioning that naloxone was available through pharmacies without a prescription, so I'm a little bit confused with that response.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that measuring drug residues in wastewater involves taking samples from wastewater treatment plans. The minister has previously indicated this this procedure was successfully used to detect the presence of COVID-19 during the pandemic in the communities of Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet.

While all types of testings have their limitations, wastewater testing seems an effective and non-invasive way of getting a good idea of what illicit drugs are currently circulating in our city, and with this information in hand we can be better prepared to develop effective and targeted programs to deter the spreading use of these harmful substances.

I would like a commitment from the minister to get back to me and inform this House of his department's next steps in implementing Iqaluit's wastewater drug testing program.  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can provide that information right now, in terms of our next steps. Currently we're exploring

a memorandum of understanding with Health Canada, which would be on toxic substances wastewater surveillance, and so that's the next step in terms of whether this is going to move forward, Mr. Speaker, and we are interested in seeing whether this can be established in Nunavut soon, keeping in mind that of course the chief public health officer's office and staff are dealing with multiple issues and multiple communities at any given time, and they are small and a very talented team so I want to send my thanks and my support to all of them and everybody working with them.

Wastewater screening can detect presence or absence of 300-plus drugs and drug metabolites, and so this is potentially very valuable data that we're interested in harnessing to better target our efforts in here in Iqaluit, as well as potentially other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1067 - 6(2): Seal and Fur Purchasing Programs**

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. The question I would like to ask is, it has to do with the selling of seal skins and furs and polar bear skins, and other animals that are not really bought these days, but people still sell seal, so that's why I'm rising this morning.

Now, the Department of Economic Development holds the responsibility of the sale or the buying of seal skins from the hunters so that hunters can make money off them. I'm sure the minister is aware under the minister's responsibility, the buying of seal skins policy is going to end on March 31, 2025, and because of that I would like to ask the minister about the policy, the way that set up, and what is the policy that is used to buy seal skins. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our staff at Environment handles, is responsible for that policy, and they buy the seal skins on behalf of Economic Development and Transportation. And that policy, from what I know, even though it has a sunset date, the buying of seal skins will continue and we want to keep on promoting the selling of these seal skins and other things. And we try to see where else we can find markets for them.

I don't want anybody to be concerned about the policy ending on that date, and I'll work closely with my minister to see if the policy needs to be amended. That's the way it is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know we don't have much time left, and it's only a little over a month away and the policy will need to be reviewed and the policies that are made in the government here affect people. And because there's not much time before it ends, it doesn't sound like it hasn't been reviewed yet. And because of that, through the planning process especially, making priorities about the fact that they're able to buy seal skins and training of their staff to make them more aware of the process, like for example the quality of seal skins.

Because of that I would like to ask the minister if the minister can get an update or do they like the way everything is set up right now, including the prices that the hunters get. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeegok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do work hard. Our staff works hard on behalf of the selling of seal skins within Canada and internationally. They are quality products and very important products that I expect about polar bear skins. We would like the prices to get higher, because they are very good sale material.

We haven't stopped work on this. Quite recently we tabled our plan on fisheries and sealing, and that was a big start. And we're still using it and try to apply it everywhere. We bring back different products back into Nunavut that can be used as sewing projects and we're still looking from the communities to see if they have anything like that available to sell, tanned seal skins, for example. Because we can sell those to the communities, and we know that there is a market in Nunavut. People in Nunavut are very good at creating things out of those materials and the price of the seal skin rises when it is made into something else. So we're going to try and keep pushing on those lines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister, for explaining that very clearly in the House. I'm sure the minister is quite aware that in 2024-2025 in the main estimates there was \$395,000 in the budget to buy seal skins and other things, and because of that, can the minister explain about how the prices are set for the things that are bought from Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River and the process of it. Is it running well when you're buying products like that?

And the other matter is the prices the hunters get. Are there any considerations as to when the prices will be able to go up? I know the minister said that they are reviewed. For 2026, are there any plans to raise the prices. That's what I would like to hear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeagok:** The skins that are sold are sent down south to distributors that are sold through auctions. Seal skins, wolf skin, polar bear skins, et cetera, are put into one auctioneer, and they have an auction once a year. Like for example if the price of seals go up, then the money is set up so that they can accommodate it. And when the polar bear prices were quite high the hunters would get paid right away, but the market down south for polar bear skins used to be nice and high, but now they're not. It has dropped a lot and we have stopped buying them for the interim. But seal skins still have a market.

We work with the Department of Environment on this matter so that like if a seal skin is sold higher than what the hunter got initially, then they will get more money at the end. So they don't get the full sale price right away when they sell the skin. So we consider this whole thing very important for the hunters that sell skins and furs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1068 - 6(2): Wolf Testing Samples**

**Mr. Savikataaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to people of Arviat.

(interpretation ends) I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Environment. Mr. Speaker, one of the programs that the Department of Environment administers, the wolf sampling collection program, and I fully support it and it is utilized by many Arviammiut, who are my constituents and a lot of the hunters in Kivalliq also access the wolf sampling program.

But Mr. Speaker, one of the complaints I hear is that it takes a very long time, sometimes, between when the hunter brings in the wolf samples to when the hunter gets paid for the wolf samples. And from my constituents I've heard sometimes it could take a month before the hunter receives payment for the samples that are brought in.

These hunters rely on the payment of the wolf samples in order to buy more fuel, maybe buy some broken snowmobile parts to go out and look for my wolfs. Can I get an explanation from the minister for why it takes so long for the hunters to receive their payments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasié.

**Hon. David Joanasié:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question, and it's good to hear the support for this program. And we do want to ensure that hunters do get paid according to what we want to provide.

This program was introduced fairly recently. But currently the department pays harvesters through online banking transfers or cheques issued through the mail. And I think, according to the department, there were plans to introduce the conservation officers to issue cheques directly. And we're trying to ensure that we're following our financial processes. But this process hasn't been yet resolved, but we're trying to work towards a solution to ensure that the hunters get paid as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

**Mr. Savikataaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this program was started by the previous, so it has been ongoing for a while, and payment has always been an issue.

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that they're working on a program to where the conservation office could write a cheque as soon as the samples are brought in, and I fully support that. It should be implemented. An example of how that is already done is their fur pricing program. A trapper or hunter brings in a wolf pelt or a fox pelt, and they are paid right there on the spot with a cheque written out by the conservation officer. Why cannot that same process be used for paying for wolf samples? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe these are separate seal skins and/or the fox – sorry, the wolf sampling program collection is, I think we'll have to look if that it can be done according to what my colleague is proposing. I don't know why it wasn't implemented at the time when this program was introduced, but we'll consider that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

**Mr. Savikataaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm fully aware that fur pricing program is a different program and different funds and those funds cannot be used to pay for the wolf sample program. But I asked the minister the process, the process in which this is done. The process is a hunter or trapper brings in their fur and they get paid on the spot with a cheque. Well that same process, even though it's a different program and different funds, could be used as far as I know, could be used to do the same thing, a wolf hunter brings in their wolf samples and they are issued a cheque for the proper amount that needs to be paid, instead of waiting for a month or even more at times before they get payment.

Can I get a commitment from the minister that before the end of this fiscal year, before the end of March, that that process will be in place so the wolf hunters in Arviat and in



the Kivalliq, and anywhere else in Nunavut, can get paid for the samples on the spot when they bring in their wolf samples. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Mr. Speaker, the wildlife operations have been working towards the necessary work to implement a new system, a model the similar to the process for purchasing seals. I can't say for certain that we will have something in place by the end of this government, but I'll pressure my department to ensure that we have something more efficient for hunters, not only in Arviat but elsewhere. Because the funds that we raise, the funds for hunters to collect these samples for and I touched on the numbers yesterday, but I wanted to mention too where there's caribou of special concern, up to 900 samples submitted. So there's up to that much that hunters can be getting. And we want to pay them as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1069 - 6(2): Emergency Preparedness for Health Centres**

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken of the recent fire in Igloolik which destroyed the Kipsigak arena. It is a huge loss to the community. We are fortunate, however, that the fire did not spread any further, especially to the community health centre, which is across the road.

Can the minister describe what actions his departmental officials were considering, in case the Igloolik community health centre suddenly became unusable or destroyed due to fire spreading from the arena to the facility. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for raising this issue and I share the concern with Igloolikimmiut. The fire that resulted, the health centre was not affected except for the smoke coming in, and you could smell the smoke inside. That did have some impact and we had to move the nurses and other medical staff to another location.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, we did have to temporarily move the staff from the facility. They weren't able to work in the facility due to the smoke and the proximity to the fire.

We're thankful to our partners at Economic Development and Transportation who made I believe the airport available as a temporary facility, not a temporary health centre but a temporary space for us to use.

In terms of preparation for the fire, if the fire had spread to the health centre, we have emergency plans in place that would have been activated, and working with our partners at Community and Government Services and other departments, we would have moved to set up an alternative location where Igloolikimmiut could be provided health services. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister. Yes, I agree it was unfortunate the fire was in the arena, but the smoke went directly to the health centre as it was right across. It had to close, yes. Before arriving here I was in the location, but you could still smell the smoke in the building. Perhaps the minister can inform us what further actions have been made to ensure the building is safe to attend to by clients in the community, to ensure smoke is not inhaled and to ensure the staff is in a safe working environment due to the fire and smoke that spread. You can still smell in the building. What actions have Health taken to ensure cleaning of the building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still working with Community and Government Services to ensure that the building is cleaned and the health centre was cleaned, and also we have regulations that the air quality has to be in par with regulations. And looking at the regulations, from my understanding there is no health hazard as it was declared, so the building is being utilized.

If there is a problem yet by the residents of Igloolik, if they feel the smell is hampering them, we will continue to work with CGS, do we have to clean further or (interpretation ends) in terms of additional steps that we could looking at, Mr. Speaker, looking at the air handling units and whether there's some cleaning that needs to happen there, or looking for other ways to ensure that the facility is comfortable and acceptable to Igloolik residents, as well as our valued staff. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the minister for that. However, you didn't respond to one of my question.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I understand that every municipality has its own disaster preparedness plan to ensure that community residents are safe, secure, and have

food and water in case of a major event. And I recognize that the Department of Health has its own emergency preparedness plans in case of a pandemic, a major outbreak, or a local disaster that results in many casualties or even deaths.

However, ensuring that health service delivery continues when there is no health facility due to such incidents as fire or flooding is a different kind of disaster. Can the minister confirm that there is a territorial plan in place to ensure that residents will continue to receive health services if a community suddenly loses the use of its health centre and if so, can he outline what is in that plan. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I'm not aware of a territorial plan as it pertains to a fire. My understanding is that there are plans in place, but they are on a community-by-community basis. In terms of an overarching plan for fire at a health centre, I would have to consult with my colleagues at Community and Government Services, specifically looking at Nunavut emergency management and what plans are in place.

In terms of the response to the fire, I just wanted to express my sincere thanks to everyone who responded so effectively, including the fire department, the municipality, the hamlet. The entire community was very supportive and working as a team is my understanding. We even had the community and the Co-op bringing food to the health centre for the front line emergency team. So it was very much appreciated and I thank Igloodikimmiut for that support.

Again, we understand that the loss of that arena and the Black Box is a significant one for the community, and we'll continue taking a collaborative approach as we work through the impacts on this and the Health department is willing to help out however we can. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1070 - 6(2): Inuit Child First Initiative**

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, in my member statement I raised concerns respecting youth programming at the Baker Lake high school. It's my understanding that some educators at the school have been employed by the District Education Authority with funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative.

Can the minister inform this House whether she's aware of the Baker Lake District Education Authority accessing Inuit Child First Initiative funds to provide educational

programming, and if so, does she know how many school positions are being filled with the funding from this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. In regards to the Inuit Child First Initiative funding that is out there, and the possible discontinuation, our department is doing what we can to have conversation to ensure that the work that is there provided through the funding, we're working with our partners to ensure that we can look at the proposals that were submitted and the positions that are attached to those and see if there are possible solutions to attaining some of the staff with that funding.

Currently in Baker Lake there are three Inuit Child First Initiative student support assistants that are hired with the use of that funds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Mr. Speaker, we have seen how important it is to have adequate staff in our schools in order to deliver a complete education program to our children. Losing educators who have been working alongside indeterminate employees would be a terrible detriment to Baker Lake's education system. It would ultimately deprive our children of their right to a quality education.

Can the minister indicate whether or when a contingency plan will be in place to ensure that ongoing delivery of a quality education program in Baker Lake's high school if the Inuit Child First Initiative is no longer available to fund the educational program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question.

As the Department of Education, we are exploring our options to help minimize the negative effects of potentially losing the Inuit Child First Initiative funding. Our aim is to work with our partners to advocate and to identify the funding required to maintain essential services that are directly coming from that funding at the moment.

As for a timeline, we've heard that it could expire on March 31, 2025, and should it expire and potentially impact our schools, we'll have to come forward with that request when we know more information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have noted that educators employed by the District Education Authority do not have the same professional development opportunities as staff who are employed by the Department of Education. If the Inuit Child First Initiative funding is no longer available, it would provide an excellent opportunity for the Department of Education to bring all individuals who have been delivering educational programming in Baker Lake under one umbrella.

Will the minister commit to looking into the process of employing educators who are currently hired through the Inuit Child First Initiative into the department-funded positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. We do have professional development that is offered through the Nunavut Teacher Association under Article 16 of that collective agreement. It establishes a fund to support professional development to all of our Nunavut Teacher Association members.

In terms of our student support assistants, we have had a number of virtual sessions for our student support assistants offered during this professional development week that we had earlier this month and the training that was offered did include de-escalation and co-regulation, trauma-informed approaches, and helping students stay in school. So there were virtual sessions offered to our student support assistants to partake in that extracurricular development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1071 - 6(2): Arctic Security and Sovereignty**

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say happy Friday to all Nunavummiut who I'm sure are joining all of our fellow Canadians in rejoicing last night's victory. I'm sure that He Shall Not Be Named – I mean the American president – must be furious right about now, and will likely call the game rigged.

Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the premier regarding Arctic security and sovereignty. Mr. Speaker, we are truly living in turbulent times, and I believe that it's very fair to say that there has never been so much anxiety and uncertainty for people of the Arctic. In recent months the world has been hearing alarming talk of annexation and assimilation.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to claim to assert Arctic sovereignty in our own nation, then we must be prepared to back our words with action. Mr. Speaker, on February 7 I e-mailed our premier in advance of his meeting with the Council of the Federation, as well as their joint mission to Washington. In the e-mail I requested that the premier seize this opportunity to advocate for the establishment of a Canadian Armed Forces base here in Iqaluit, and that it be manned by a newly formed Nunavut regiment.

Again, Mr. Speaker I would like to note that I was equally surprised by the leader of the opposition's announcement, a similar announcement here in Iqaluit on February 10. However, Mr. Speaker, I believe that establishing a permanent Canadian Armed Forces base in Iqaluit would bring a significant amount of employment, and equally important, federal investment and dual use infrastructure.

With regards to the creation of a Nunavut regiment, I believe that enhancing Nunavut Rangers beyond its current limited mandate by the Canadian Armed Forces would be a game-changer for Nunavut, and more importantly, our youth.

So I would like to ask for the record, will the premier confirm our government's support for the Arctic security enhancements that I've just spoken of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** I would like to thank my colleague for his question, as well as his e-mail that he had sent on February 7.

As we all know and are feeling, each and every one of us, not only here in Nunavut but right across this country, the claim about the 51st state is really targeting our sovereignty as a very proud country that we are, and that job is something that we're taking very seriously as a country.

I was very fortunate recently to have just, as I mentioned in my minister's statement, just had gone to Washington DC with all my premier colleagues from across this country, to show the unity that we are seeing across this country, and for us to assert our sovereignty as a country. And as such, I share my colleagues' sentiments in terms of that we have to seize this moment and we do see an opportunity for nation-building to happen from coast to coast, and then to the northern coast that has been neglected.

With that in mind, I mentioned the Washington trip. Just yesterday I had a First Minister's meeting with the Prime Minister as well as Minister Blair, as well as all the premiers from across this country were in that meeting. We talked about Arctic security and sovereignty and further discussed the importance of seeing investments.

To the member's question, we have not pushed for whether we support or not military base here in Nunavut. What we've been saying is that we are open to have these

conversations. It's important that northerners are at the table to discuss the very important topic that was brought up. But we are open to it, and I very much support having deeper conversations to see what that could look like in the very near future with my colleagues here as well as Inuit organizations as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the premier for that response. As the premier had previously indicated, he joined the Canadian premiers in the mission to Washington, DC.

I would like to ask the premier if he could inform the House about what specific discussions he had with U.S. lawmakers and officials about the issue of Arctic security. And I would also like to ask if the premier could inform the House about what sort of reaction he received. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for the that question. The Washington trip really allowed us to be able to tell our story, in particular as northern premiers between myself, my good friends in the NWT and Yukon, to talk about the potential of seeing nation-building.

During our meetings, as I indicated in my minister's statement, we really emphasized nation-building projects that are being led here in this territory. In particular I'm looking at the Arctic security corridor, which is the Grays Bay Road and Port Project, which has the full support of all the members here, and that's an Inuit-led, Inuit-driven project.

I had the ability to mention the Kivalliq Hydro Fibre Link, and I know that's been of significant importance here in this House as well as a transmission line and connectivity wide that would be nation-building as well.

The Iqaluit Hydro Project was one that I mentioned as a nation-building opportunity as well that could connect the capital, but also the largest consumer of diesel in the territory to that.

And with the discussions about the improvements to the FOB, or the Ford operating sites, any new investment will require in supporting infrastructures such as power among other things.

So I brought that up, as well as the Qikiqtarjuaq Deep Sea Port being one where it's right on the Northwest Passage entry point and one that's dual use.

And so through those infrastructure projects, we did discuss about the opportunity of securing energy, but in particular critical minerals and the potential for Nunavut to play a big role in opening up markets and tapping into the incredible resource that we have here in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nunavut and Greenland enjoy a very unique relationship. Our Inuit heritage and language have endured, despite a history of colonization and assimilation.

Mr. Speaker, I stand with our neighbours to the east when I hear them say that Greenland is not for sale. I would like to ask, can the premier expand on what sort of discussions he has had with the Greenlandic government to support their right to sovereignty and self-determination. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The engagement that I had was actually just the one in Washington, where I was fortunate to meet with the representatives from Greenland as well as the ambassador of Denmark, really as a courtesy visit. We do share not only a border, but we do share language, culture, and family with our very deep, close friends of Greenland.

As the House knows, back in 2022 we had signed an MOU, a memorandum of understanding to strengthen that relationship where we've wanted to look at strengthening opportunities in fisheries, tourism, and bringing movement of people, which we've seen the successful launch of the link between Iqaluit and Nuuk.

During that meeting we really talked about broader topics of Arctic security, what more we could do in terms of strengthening our ties, whether it's fisheries or whether it's sports, as was noted as well, but we didn't get into the specifics of the conversation of the U.S. president. That's really up to the people of Greenland, and I respect their sovereignty around what they want to see. But we always stand firm as a northern friend, as a northern family that we support their ambitions as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1072 - 6(2): Airport Infrastructure**

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.



As the Minister will recall from the recent Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, my colleague from Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet tabled a copy of the resolution that were made at the October meeting of Kivalliq mayors.

Mr. Speaker, one of the resolutions that was passed addressed the critical need for the Naujaat airport runway to be extended. As the Minister is aware, Naujaat airport runway is the shortest runway in the region. This causes many challenges for air carriers serving the community.

When I raised this issue during our recent Fall Sitting, the Minister indicated that he will look into the situation.

Can the Minister provide an update today on how his department is working to address the needs for a runway extension at Naujaat airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeegok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to review all the requests that we have been receiving from this House. For Naujaat in particular, when that question was raised, I looked into it in terms of when the last work was done. And in terms of reviewing on the extension of the runway and that, work has recently been done, and what's stopping it is the cost that it's going to require.

Airstrip expansions don't fall under the federal programs that we tend to get for airstrip improvements, so this would be a Government of Nunavut expense that would be needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I would like to see the extension of the airstrip in Naujaat.

(interpretation ends) The community of Naujaat was happy that a new airport terminal building had been under construction. Can the minister provide an update today on when it's expected to be fully complete, operational, and can he confirm his department's plans regarding the airport terminal building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeegok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today let's remember that sometimes the plans change, if everything goes well, if everything unexpected doesn't happen. So we expect it to be open in April 2025, once everything is completed

on target. But I'm very pleased that there's an air terminal being constructed in that community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the minister, too. I will welcome the minister to come and open the air terminal officially. And it will be very interesting to see. It's not a small facility.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, he tabled the Nunavut Arctic Airports 20-year Capital Needs Assessment, updated in March of 2023. The report identified a number of issues at Coral Harbour airport, including the needs to address several "legacy abandoned building assets."

Can the minister provide an update today on how these issues are to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeegok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the second question that was asked about the old airport, that is part of the plan to demolish it and move it out of the site. That's part of the project once the building is open.

In terms of old legacy that needs demolishing, we've identified them through our contaminated sites to become part of the plan in terms of cleaning those out.

I'm pleased to say that the federal government did a big project to clean up one of these communities, and I hope that initiatives like those will continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1073 - 6(2): Inuit Child First Initiative**

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the premier. Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement I gave examples of just two tremendous, important programs which are currently funded under the Inuit Child First Initiative.

Can the premier tell this House what conversations he had with his cabinet colleagues respecting the potential impacts to Nunavut residents if the Inuit Child First Initiative is no longer funded by the federal government after March 31, 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for his question. I've heard from many Nunavummiut just on the positive impact in terms of the Inuit Child First Initiative, and I've actually seen firsthand when I went to the communities and visited the schools of what breakfast programs that are being offered by it and the huge impact that I saw directly with my own eyes, in terms of the children wanting to go to school that much more. So I just wanted to mention that.

I've had some discussions with my colleagues here and in this government, in particular to the Department of Health as well as Family Services which I know had provided letters.

And I have also further had discussions with our Member of Parliament, in terms of the significance around this particular program and the positive impact this has had. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke to two important programs being delivered in Rankin Inlet with funding from the Inuit Child First Initiative, which has been very beneficial to children and families in the community.

While I recognize that programs provided by such Government of Nunavut Departments of Health and Family Services do address food insecurity and other needs, it is clearly not enough, given the extent to which these supports are being supplemented by the Inuit Child First Initiative.

Can the premier provide and update what discussions, if any, they may have had with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to ensure that supplementary funding will be made available to fill the gaps if the federal Inuit Child First Initiative is not continued after March 31, 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question. I had high level discussions with the new president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, which I know has been advocating for this particular program to continue past the March 31, 2025 deadline that we're anticipating.

Further, I know as a government we are involved in different working groups; in particular Department of Education works very closely with NTI, as well as Health, as indicated. But it is through those channels that we have been advocating for that.

Specifically to the member's question, I did mention at a high level with the president, and I will commit to continuing to have that conversation with the President Tunraluk to see what more we can do. I know we are working everything that we can to ensure that our children in particular to the breakfast program.

I know there's other programs that were mentioned as well in particular to that, because we know that has a huge benefit in terms of making sure we want to see the education outcomes keep improving, and it starts with making sure children have a healthy diet.

And I just want to recognize Minister Gross, who has been a strong advocate of what more we can do with the federal government to secure that particular priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that our government is doing what it can within the limitation of our budget, given the capacity of our work force and respecting the legacy of our past. Despite many challenges, Nunavut's future holds a lot of potential. That future potential lies in our children and youth who need to grow up healthy, strong, and able.

Our government needs to work with outside entities to ensure to entrench the support and services are available to Nunavut's children and youth.

Will the premier commit to addressing the need for additional funding to address the critical gaps that are currently being filled by Inuit Child First Initiative funding and report back to this House at our next sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the strong advocacy of my colleague across for a federal program that many of our constituents have benefitted from and we've seen the direct impact of that investment.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that we are meeting with our partners with Nunavut Tunngavik on the 24th, in particular with the Department of Education.

I can commit for us to continue to advocate and lobby through our partnerships that we do have to continue to talk about the benefits of the program.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add on as well that most recently we've had the Minister of Northern Affairs here come to the territory. During that meeting, I had the opportunity to bring up this very important topic; even though it doesn't fall within his jurisdiction, it

falls under Indigenous Services Canada and not through the Minister responsible for Northern Affairs, I did push him to talk about the importance of that program and for him to lobby his colleagues to continue with the program, as we've seen such a direct impact towards this.

And with that, I will continue to always lobby hard and continue to work hard to push for these types of federal programs to ensure that Nunavummiut have access to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I would move a motion to extend the oral question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There are none. The question period is extended for another 30 minutes. Before we continue, we'll take a 15-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed from 10:46 to 11:05*

**Speaker:** Welcome back everyone. Before the break there was a request to extend question period for another 30 minutes. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

#### **Oral Question 1074 - 6(2): Kugaaruk Power Plant**

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on to ask my detailed questions, I wanted to echo the Minister on his statement, and I'll quote this one, Mr. Speaker.

“QEC has revised its mission, vision, and value statements to better reflect our purpose and commitment to Nunavut communities. This initiative was driven by the need to modernize QEC's corporate strategy and ensure alignment with industry best practices, community needs, community needs and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Mr. Speaker.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit the issue of Kugaaruk's new power plant. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister is aware, the community's current power plant is over 50 years old. It may not be an elder, but it is certainly a senior.

Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's current business plan indicates that the construction of the new power plant for Kugaaruk remains a priority.

Mr. Speaker, in November of last year the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued awards for the design and construction of new power plants in the communities of Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven and Igloolik. I'm very happy for these communities.

Mr. Speaker, the question is can the Minister provide an update today on when the Qulliq Energy Corporation will start the procurement process for Kugaaruk's new power plant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague for asking the questions. In Kugaaruk, the power plant, we have known for a long time that they need a new power plant and the money from the federal government called the Arctic Energy Fund made an announcement and we had some expectations that the Kugaaruk power plant would be able to use some of those new monies. That's what we were expecting.

However, with everything costing more now to build infrastructure, it had to be removed from the plan to construct a new one using federal government money.

However, (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in our 10-year capital plan, Kugaaruk is identified as a priority community for needing a new power plant, similar to several other communities in Nunavut, and in terms of the timelines for procurement, that depends on when we can secure capital funding for the project.

Without additional supports from our federal partners, we would be looking at either taking on additional debt, which is a challenge for us, or looking at further rate increases to fund capital projects like the plant in Kugaaruk.

We don't want to increase rates further, and when it comes to capital, we are looking for additional support from our federal partners to allow communities like Kugaaruk to get modern, efficient power plants on line. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue during our recent Fall Sitting, the Minister indicated that the corporation was seeking additional resources from the federal government with which to construct a new power plant.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate what the estimated cost is to construct a new power plant in Kugaaruk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Any estimates that we have at this point in time would be ballpark type figures. The cost of the Kugaaruk power plant would depend on the design, and so following the design, that's when the more accurate cost estimates can be developed.

We do know that it is a power plant that needs replacement. We know that what's happening when we're running these aged power plants like Kugaaruk's, we're incurring additional costs around the operations. They need more maintenance; there are fuel efficiency issues; there's increased risk of catastrophic failure.

And those are the concerns and the needs that we have been bringing to multiple federal agencies, letting them know that what we're trying to do on behalf of Nunavummiut is a part of securing Canada's sovereignty and security in the north.

Without reliable power, without providing communities like Kugaaruk with adequate power-generating infrastructure, you know, Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security is directly affected. Because without power, we can't provide health care. We can't provide education or transportation.

So it's a very important function for not just Nunavut residents, but government departments, including federal agencies and folks. So it's something we are pushing quite hard on, in terms of the need for additional supports to replace power plants like Kugaaruk's. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister will be aware, the municipal council of Kugaaruk passed a formal motion in the year 2021 concerning the location of the proposed new power plant.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if the present municipal council is fully in agreement with the proposed location of the new power plant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the involvement from municipal council or the active discussion between Qulliq Energy Corporation and the municipality, I'm not up to date on the very latest information there.

We do take input from municipalities very seriously when we're looking at a new power plant. We consult with the local government as well as residents and other stakeholders around location.

The usual priorities or factors that go into where we would put a new power plant, where is the tank farm located, because getting fuel from that tank farm is critical. What's the layout of the community's grid and other issues around geo-technical. Power plants need to be on stable ground. There's a lot of vibration. There's heat generated from the gen set. So I'm just trying to explain it's not a simple matter as just saying, there's an empty lot, okay, let's put the power plant here.

And it's also a case of Qulliq Energy Corporation wanting to control costs where, you know, for knowing these concerns, concerns around exhaust from the diesel plant.

You know, if somebody suggested to us put it 10 kilometres out of town, we would have to say well, that's going to be a challenge for us because operationally we have staff who need to go there. You have power lines that need to be run to and from the plant.

So it's not a simple matter. We're continuing to work with the hamlet of Kugaaruk on this issue. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1075 - 6(2): Ensuring Community School Bus Services**

**Ms. Nutarak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Pond Inlet has been struggling to provide school bussing service during the coldest and darkest months of the year with no functioning school bus for the Ulaajuk Elementary School and the Nasivvik High School.

Can the Minister clarify how her department monitors whether Nunavut communities have adequate school bus services so that children can get to school early or safely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question in regards to bus services.

We do have a number of busses across our territory, and there was bussing services that were in the community. Unfortunately, there was an incident where the bus is not functioning at the moment.

But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we do have contractors that run bus services, as well as our local district education authorities that also run bus services. If the bus isn't properly



working in a community, we're happy to help support getting the bus back up and running if it requires minor repairs.

But we also do have allocated funds each year to support the purchase of a new bus. If the community requests a new bus for the community, the best channel it is to go through a motion with the district education authority and bring that forward with the Department of Education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

**Ms. Nutarak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this House recently approved 500,000 for school busses in the department's 2025-2026 capital estimates.

I recognize the local district education authorities can formally request a new school bus from the Department of Education, and the department reviews those requests in accordance with its school bussing allocation policy.

Can the Minister confirm whether she has received a request for a new school bus from Pond Inlet District Education Authority, and if so, whether the request have been approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. Yes, a new bus has been ordered for Pond Inlet, and we are working with the community to ensure that it arrives on the sea lift. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

**Ms. Nutarak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Minister, for your response. Mr. Speaker, one of Pond Inlet's school busses was repaired over the summer and then vandalized right before school started. The other bus cannot be fixed, due to fire damage and broken windows. There is only one bus being used to transport kids to school.

It is important that adequate school bussing services are available for the safety and protection of our children. Can the minister clarify the Pond Inlet District Education Authority have requested one or two school busses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. One school bus has been ordered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Oral Question 1076 - 6(2): Status of Collective Bargaining**

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you for recognizing me a second time today, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for Minister of Human Resources, who is responsible for the *Public Service Act* and the government's collective agreements with the Nunavut Employees Union and the Nunavut Teachers Association.

As the Minister is aware, the current collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union expired in September of 2024, which is over four months ago.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked about the status of collective bargaining during the Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Minister indicated that negotiations between the parties had recently begun and that she hoped that an agreement would be reached by the spring of this year.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide a clear update today on the status of negotiations between the government and the union. 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. So the Department of Human Resources has met with the Nunavut Employees Union for three weeks, including this week. I won't get into bargaining in public, but I can say that they are making progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm surprised to hear that they haven't met more frequently.

Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union expired at the end of last December, and the government's collective agreement with the Nunavut Teachers Association expires in a few months time, at the end of June.

Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned that we could be heading for a situation where all three agreements have expired at the time of this Assembly's dissolution. Can the Minister confirm the extent to which the government's negotiation mandates have been finalized with respect to the upcoming negotiations with the Teachers Association and the Qulliq Energy Corporation's NEU bargaining unit. 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. So with both the Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Nunavut Teachers Association, the bargaining team is in place, and we are working internally on a package. We know that they have meetings that will take place in February and March of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has recently introduced a new Nunavut-wide hiring policy, a new out-of-territory remote hiring policy, and a new telework policy. When I raised this subject with the Minister during our Fall Sitting, I asked her to clarify what concerns, if any, have been raised by the unions in respect to the implementation of these policies. And I asked her to clarify the extent which matters covered by these policies will be subject to negotiation as part of the current round of collective bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, at that time the minister could not provide a response, so I will again ask her today for an answer. 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. Those policies were discussed and they were consulted on the policies, but they're not a part of the discussion in the bargaining. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1077 - 6(2): Timeline to Providing Further Details**

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my line of questioning with the Minister of Community and Government Services from yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, in one of the responses the Minister gave me yesterday, he's quoting as saying:

"I've been preparing some notes for further details around the letter to my colleagues as an update, and that is still forthcoming."

Speaking specifically of the letter that the minister received in support on January 27, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's support the Kivalliq Baffin connector fibre project.

What is the timeline of providing those further details to this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for following up on this.

Mr. Speaker, what I meant by further details, I had prepared some correspondence to my colleagues in this House around updates on certain topics, including the Kivalliq Baffin connector project. And with that, now that the statement of work has been completed, but also we have the letter of support from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, we are anticipating that this Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission does their due diligence on this proposal, and then we'll go for the next steps.

I'll state too that I had in my correspondence with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated we were looking at, there was talks about co-owning this asset once it is being built. We are still engaging on that, around what model, looking at options, reviewing with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Mr. Hickers.

**Mr. Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that response. I will follow-up on again on that co-ownership question.

But first, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask did the letter from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated have any conditions contained within that letter, and have they been met, and if not with why not, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the letter from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated I'm taking it as a letter of support and for the project to proceed to the next steps.

And within that, if I'm not mistaken, I believe through the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission's work, that letter might be brought out to the public eventually. But my take is that there's a letter of support but also looking at how can we work better on infrastructure projects, including the Baffin Kivalliq Connector Project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickers.

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still not really clear on whether there are any conditions posed in that letter of support.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's board of directors met the third week of October in 2024. In the motion on the topic of the allocation of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated remaining Indigenous community infrastructure funding with which they passed a motion to provide support in the amount of \$13.4 million to support a co-ownership and co-maintenance investment in Nunavut's Kivalliq Baffin Fibre Project. Was that contained within the letter as a condition of support?

As the minister just mentioned, there are some discussions on co-ownership. Is there a timeline associated with that component as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated has had a high level of interest on this project, but also others and has gone so far as wanting to put money towards it.

Mr. Speaker, it's not stability, as far as I could see, where this particular project is being put conditions or terms towards moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the review on looking at models of potential co-ownership or that work, that's still ongoing. I can't specify exactly when we'll complete the work, but I'll keep my colleagues updated throughout and keep them apprised of what discussions that I've been having, or my officials have been dealing with on that particular topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Oral Questions. Member for Uqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

### **Oral Question 1078 - 6(2): Seal and Fur Purchasing Programs**

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. I have a number of questions, and I did ask questions to the Minister of Transportation.

Now I'll ask some questions today of the Minister of Environment concerning the department's seal and fur purchasing policy or programs. For this reason, how then do you utilize purchasing furs based on quality, or do you decide without any model to use? How is that approach in terms of factoring the cost of the furs and skins? And that's in addition to my questions on furs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for Uqqummiut for raising more questions on this. The purchase of furs and skins which the Department of Environment purchased from the hunters and the quality of furs are completely looked at how the quality is, and the cost is also factored in, based on prices internationally. If interest are there, the prices go up. And if we have good price, the prices are established and we review. We are part of the review, as the Department of Environment, on the costing of furs and skins to ensure the benefits for than Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it is an international sales of furs and the cost that is factored in, my question to that, the elders in the Arctic who know quality of furs and skins and what condition the skins are, they have the knowledge and competence whether the skin is good for making materials, and so forth. Have they been included or consulted with as for the cost, to cost to be showed in view of interest of hunters who sell skins? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleague's further question. Mr. Speaker, the institution that deal with skins and quality of skins has included our seamstresses and those involved. We're continuing to monitor this area.

As I said earlier, the international trade and purchase of furs and skins that are sold abroad in Greenland or in Nunavut, the price that is fixed on the availability of the skins and what the market says is because it's market-driven.

Again, I know the Department of Environment also depend on themselves, that also are part of the process, and that they get more training is also to ensure quality of skins are taken into consideration and what care is required in purchasing of these furs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need to have it fixed properly. For example, if it's a skin of an older seal, we would pay at least \$75, depending on the size. This is a good skin, it can be made into clothing, for example, there's room for improvement. For example, if it's a skin from an older seal, we have to look at the quality of the skin and the size. For example, if it's a smaller skin, it will be about \$60, \$65.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell your department that we have to include elders who know the quality of the skins and how much they would be worth. We have to have properly priced seal skins. There is room for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, today it's approximately \$40.10, and then there's about \$80 for larger skin. Could we make changes so that we have proper pricing of the skins that are sold to your department? I'm asking those questions on behalf of the people of Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

**Hon. David Joanasie:** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a very good question, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Environment, I'll use wolf pelts as an example. There has been an increase in the price of wolf pelts, and we usually use advisors on what to pay for those pelts. We are going to keep an eye out on what other programs there are that can be adjusted to Nunavut accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Question Period is now over. Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Petitions. Item 11, Responses to Petitions. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13, Tabling of Documents. Mr. Lightstone.

### **Item 13: Tabling of Documents**

#### **Tabled Document 348 - 6(2) Correspondence from Federal Minister of Employment**

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you all recall, during the Fall Sitting I tabled my exchanges of correspondence with federal and territorial ministers of immigration concerning issues and initiatives under their respective jurisdictions.

I'm pleased today to table a copy of correspondence that I recently received from the Federal Minister of Employment Work Force Development and Labour concerning the administration of temporary foreign worker program in Nunavut, and I encourage all members to read the document with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 13, Tabling of Documents. Item 14, Notices of Motion. Tabling of Documents, Mr. Hickes.

#### **Tabled Document 349 - 6(2) Bill 61 – Consideration in Committee – Outstanding Follow-ups**

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have one document to table today in my capacity as Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole. The document is a copy of correspondence from the Minister of Community and Government Services in response to questions that were asked during the consideration of the department's 2025-2026 capital estimates during the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole, during the recent fall 2024 sitting of the Legislative Assembly. I encourage all members to review the document with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 13, Tabling of Documents. Item 14, Notices of Motions. I recognize the Chair for Regular Members' Caucus. Mr. Malliki.

#### **Item 14: Notices of Motions**

##### **Motion 44 - 6(2) Extended Sitting Hours and Days**

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 24, 2025 I will move the following motion:

I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours and days as the Speaker deems fit, to assist with the business before the House during the present sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 14, Notices of Motions. Item 15, Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. I recognize the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Gross.

#### **Item 15: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills**

##### **Bill 57 - An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act - Notice**

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 24, 2025 that Bill 57, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 15, Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. I recognize the Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

##### **Bill 66 - Early Learning and Child Care Act - Notice**

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 24, 2025 that Bill 66, Early Learning and Child Care Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Government House Leader on behalf of the Finance Minister, Mr. Joanasié.

##### **Bill 67 - An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act - Notice**

##### **Bill 68 - An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act - Notice**



**Bill 70 - Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026 - Notice****Bill 71 - Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2024-2025 - Notice****Bill 72 - Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2025-2026 - Notice**

**Hon. David Joanasi:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 24, 2025 that the following bills be read for the first time:

Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act;

Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act;

Bill 70, Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026;

Bill 71, Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2024-2025; and

Bill 72, Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2025-2026.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Bill 69 - An Act Consequential to the Government Reorganization of 2025 - Notice**

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday 24, 25, Bill 69, An Act Consequential to the Government Reorganization of 2025 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 15, Notice of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasi.

**Hon. David Joanasi:** I give notice that on Monday, February 24, 2025 that Bill 73, Planning Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 16, Motions. Item 17, First Reading of Bills. Item 18, Second Reading of Bills. Item 19, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. There are no items in the committee. Item 20, Report of the Committee of the Whole.

There is no report. Item 21, Third Reading of Bills. Item 22, *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

### **Item 22: Orders of the Day**

**Mr. Clerk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple announcements. There is a meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislation at 1:30 today, as well as a meeting of the Management Services Board tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. as well as a meeting of the regular members caucus on Monday morning at 10 a.m.

(interpretation) Orders of the Day for February 24, 1:30:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills:  
Bill 67,  
Bill 66,  
Bill 68,  
Bill 72,  
Bill 73
16. First Reading of Bills
17. Second Reading of Bills
18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
19. Report of the Committee of the Whole
20. Third Reading of Bills
21. Orders of the Day.

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker:** Members, enjoy your weekend. As mentioned, we had a good hockey game last night. We won. With Nunavut being a hockey community, I can say I can almost pass for a hockey player just for one signal. I have to get rid of one more tooth in front of me. The House stands adjourned until Monday, February 24, at 1:30 p.m. Sergeant-at-Arms.

*>>House adjourned at 11:49*



