

**NUNAVUT HANSARD**

**UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

**IQALUIT, NUNAVUT**

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Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 55

***Corrections:***

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## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

### Speaker

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok**  
(Quttiktuq)

*Minister of Justice; Minister for Labour; Minister responsible for the Human Rights Tribunal; 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 Mines*

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

*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 Joanasie**  
(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**  
**Monday, February 24, 2025**

**Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaernerck, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, 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): *Ullaakuut.* (interpretation) Before we start I would like to ask Mr. Simailak to open the meeting with a prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker's Statement**

**Speaker** (interpretation): Let's have a good day. Welcome to the people who are listening to the proceedings on the radio and on live TV.

(interpretation ends) Before we proceed with the Orders of the Day, I will like to welcome our newest staff member of the Office of the Legislative Assembly. She is now the Administrative Assistant to the Clerk. Please join me in welcoming Dorcus Nattaq.

>>*Applause*

Welcome, Ms. Natak. Item 2, Budget Address. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

**Item 2: Budget Address**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, also along with my colleagues. I apologize my voice is not a hundred percent.

I'm very pleased to take this today to appear before the Legislative Assembly to present the Government of Nunavut's budget for 2025-2026 fiscal year.

This moment is significant for me, as it marks my fourth and final budget address in Nunavut's sixth Legislative Assembly as the government's Minister of Finance.

As I reflect on our journey over the past four years, I am filled with pride for what we have accomplished in pursuit of our collective vision. We're very proud of it.

Today together we are working tirelessly to advance the priorities of Nunavummiut and lay a foundation for a stronger more prosperous territory.

We may not always agree on the precise path forward, but I am confident we all share the same goal – to see Nunavut thrive and Nunavummiut live healthy, happy lives.

Through collaboration with Inuit leaders and all members of the Legislative Assembly, our government started a fresh new course with Katujjiluta mandate.

One time together in Cambridge Bay resulted in visionary plan that acknowledges the progress of the past, while calling on us to action in the future.

Some people will say we didn't succeed or we won't succeed. They said our ideas were too bold and that our dreams were unrealistic.

But we persisted, Mr. Speaker, and instead of dwelling on the obstacles that make our life difficult, we channeled our energy into finding solutions and partners willing to work with us to achieve our common goals.

This result is that many of our Katujjiluta aspirations are no longer ideas written on paper or figures on a budget. They are tangible, concrete outcomes taking shape in our communities, literally changing our territory's landscape.

>>*Applause*

I am pleased to say our commitment to supporting elders to age in dignity is one of our dreams which is coming to life, Mr. Speaker.

In my first address as finance minister I spoke of meeting a young boy in Rankin Inlet. Do you remember that story? I met him while knocking on doors during the last election. We got to chatting about how he missed his anaanatsiaq, who was living in a seniors home away from Rankin Inlet. I promised him at that time I would do what I could do to help him, told him I hoped to get re-elected by Rankinmuit, to come to this Assembly to work alongside all of you to make life better for Nunavummiut, especially the elders who claimed our sovereignty and built our communities.

Mr. Speaker, when we announced the substantial completion of the Kivalliq long-term care centre, a state-of-the-art, 24-bed facility to provide top-quality care close to home for elders with complex health needs, I thought about that boy and other families like his.



Now they no longer have to miss out on making connections and can instead cherish meaningful moments with their grandparents and elders.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, developed with an overall budget of \$59.4 million, the centre symbolizes our commitment to honouring elders. It reflects the progress that can be achieved through the collaborative investment in Nunavut's future and future partnership with Inuit organizations that share in the responsibility of providing care and support for our elders.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in 2025-2026, we will continue to fund the programs and services that Nunavummiut rely on, and plan to spend about 3.08 billion for operating, and about \$350.2 million for capital and infrastructure. These budgets are more than covered by the projected revenues of nearly \$3.4 billion, including almost \$316.7 million from our revolving funds.

We expect to receive \$2.22 billion from the Territorial Financing Formula, the largest federal transfer we receive, as well as \$132 million in other federal transfers and \$458 million through the third-party funding agreements.

We also anticipate our own-source revenues to be \$264.1 million, which includes \$180 million in taxes, \$19.1 million in staff housing rent, and \$45.6 million from other sources.

This budget once again demonstrates our commitment to responsible fiscal management through the allocation of 150 million contingency fund to address unforeseen expenses that may arise through the year.

We direct the departments to meet staffing needs through vacancy management instead of creating new positions. Today's budget increase of \$33.5 million account for the significant salary increase of our public service announced last May. This ensures a measured and controlled approach to public service growth, while addressing the territorial wage gap.

Decided outside of the union negotiation process, of increase for public service salaries recognizes the care and commitment for the people who dedicate their careers to making Nunavut better. It will help us to attract and retain talent to government, strengthen local economies, and support Nunavummiut families.

Mr. Speaker, the only exception to next year's staffing freeze is for the new Elders Secretariat in the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

(interpretation) In Katujjiluta, we promised a whole-of-government approach to support elders as they guide us through the next chapter of our history.

In 2025-2026, EIA will receive \$1 million and four new staff to complement two existing positions that will implement our elders and seniors strategy announced last year. This new unit delivers on this commitment, becoming the government's main point of contact with elders for communications, accountability, and coordination.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker our culture and heritage is what makes Nunavut special, and preserving them is fundamental to our identity as Nunavummiut. In 2025-2026 we will invest \$1 million in capital funding to enhance heritage facilities and \$500,000 for public library infrastructure, to support learning and cultural enrichment in our communities.

(interpretation) Demonstrating our commitment to strengthening the Inuit language, for this we are allocated \$5.54 million to enhance the Inuit Language Implementation Fund, assisting departments and public agencies to build capacity to deliver bilingual programs and services and so that they can respond in Inuktitut as well, so that Inuktitut language can be strengthened within the government departments and public agencies.

>> *Applause*

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, our plan for a stronger, more responsive government goes even further. As of April 1, we are restructuring several departments to meet the growing needs of Nunavummiut and deliver better services. With a renewed focus on community engagement through the new Department of Community Services, and the renewed focus on government operations through the new Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, we will provide services and infrastructure aligned to community needs.

This includes establishing Service Nunavut, a centralized, single point of contact for accessing key government services. Service Nunavut will serve as a vital bridge between residents and the essential programs they rely on stream lining access to information and support.

By integrating various functions into a new "one stop shop", we aim to reduce barriers, enhance efficiency, and ensure Nunavummiut can navigate through the government with ease.

>> *Applause*

Whether it's applying for vital documents, accessing citizen services or seeking permits, Service Nunavut will simplify these processes, modernizing government policies and operations, and save time and effort for individuals, families, and businesses, and communities across the territories.

Mr. Speaker, the budget for the new Department of Community Services will be \$162.4 million, including an increase of \$2.4 million for the Arctic Winter Games.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

>> *Applause*

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** For the new Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, we are budgeting \$262.3 million, including increases of \$1.49 million for the operation of six new air terminal buildings, and \$1 million for the Iqaluit airport.

To mitigate the effects of climate change, we are also committing \$500,000 for the Department of Environment to introduce a new independent power producer subsidy delivered by the Qulliq Energy Corporation, a key tool to support Nunavut's transition from fossil fuel dependence to developing renewable energy.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

>> *Applause*

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation):** Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of Nunavummiut is always at the heart of our priorities and influences every aspect of our work as Inuit. For 2025-2026 we propose a \$66 million increase for the Department of Health's budget, bringing its total budget to just over \$580 million.

This includes an increase of over \$6 million for local long-term care services, complementing our \$73.3 million five-year funding for Embassy West Senior Living in Ottawa.

Next year, an additional \$7.5 million is allocated to services and supplies, supporting community-based health care and reducing our reliance on southern medical facilities.

>> *Applause*

To keep our health centres operational and responsive, we are adding \$11.5 million to strengthen paramedic services, bringing the total budget to \$25.5 million.

We are allocating an additional \$12.8 million to supplement duty travel, ensuring our health care professionals can reach the communities where their services are needed the most.

And we are providing an increase of \$20.4 million for out-of-territory hospital and physician services and mental health placements, bringing the total budget to \$134 million, ensuring Nunavummiut receive the specialized care they so require.

>> *Applause*

This budget also includes significant capital investments for health, such as over 15 million for Aqqusariaq, formally the Nunavut recovery Centre in Iqaluit; 1.4 million for the Nunavut long-term care facility in Cambridge Bay; \$4.6 million for the long-term care facility in Iqaluit; and \$1.5 million for the design of a new health centre in Qikiqtarjuaq.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, these investments in the general health and well-being of our community members is complemented by funding to support vulnerable Nunavummiut. In 2025-2026, this includes a budget of almost 230 million for the Department of Family Services, an increase of 33.5 million.

>> *Applause*

Of this, \$22.5 million is to address the department's perennial operations and maintenance deficit, ensuring it can continue delivering essential services throughout the year as well as \$2.87 million in financial support for foster families to improve stability and care for children in need.

We are also providing increases of \$2.18 million for in-territory group homes, and \$1.5 million to enhance youth transitional housing and support services.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut's youth population is our greatest asset, and investing in their education and personal development is vital for our territory's future successes.

In 2025-2026, our government will invest over \$10 million in capital funding for major renovations to the school in Coral Harbour, and \$31.5 million for the construction of a new high school in Taloyoak.

>> *Applause*

For the Department of Education, we also propose \$1.07 million to fund teaching positions, and \$849,000 to bolster the department's human resource capabilities.

We will provide \$500,000 to support school bussing services, ensuring reliable transportation for students and making it easier for families to get their children to school on time every day, one of the most important things they can do for their children's future.

We are also allocating \$3 million to Education and \$1.8 million for the Nunavut Arctic College to fund their IT infrastructure, supporting our students and educators to access modern systems that support learning and innovation.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, housing remains one of our highest priorities, receiving much of our attention during the term of our government. Achieving the target set out in Igluliuqatigiingniq, the Nunavut 3000 strategy for building houses, is programs the most ambitious of our objectives, and in order to meet the challenge we need all hands on deck.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to everyone working with us to transform housing, especially the four MLAs who agreed to join our Housing Task Force Committee, the MLAs for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Aivilik, Uqqummiut, and Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet. I thank each and every single one of you for the feedback and the ideas and healthy discussions we've had and will continue to have. They are informing our approach to expanding the housing continuum, increasing local training opportunities, and operating public and affordable housing, and we are grateful for that collaboration.

>> *Applause*

Since announcing our housing strategy in 2022, NHC has worked to accelerate supply and lower construction costs, introducing new policies and programs that make it easier for everyone to participate in the housing market. Because of these efforts, we are on track to not just meet but exceed our Katujjiluta commitment to deliver 1,000 new housing units within the term of our government.

>> *Applause*

The office of the chief building official reports that as of December 31, 2024, 855 new residential units are being added to Nunavut's housing continuum by all builders in the last three years. These units are in various stages of construction and will add significant capacity to our housing continuum once they are complete.

In 2025-2026, we will provide housing corporation nearly \$110 million in capital funding to keep the progress going, including \$52 million for public housing and \$20 million for staff and affordable housing.

We will also provide \$19 million to retrofit existing homes and undertake mould remediation, ensuring they are energy efficient, safe, and suitable for Nunavummiut families.

We will provide an increase of just over \$13 million for local housing organizations to operate the new units being built, and for power, fuel, and water, including \$5.6 million to the City of Iqaluit to cover its increase in the government rate for water and sewer.

Our partnerships with Inuit organizations and private sector are instrumental in advancing our goals, and we plan to continue collaborating with them to develop a construction workforce development strategy that leverages housing investments to provide good local jobs in the trades and increase the number of Nunavummiut who are skilled workers and apprentices.

>> *Applause*

To support this the 2025-2026 budget provides \$3.8 million for Nunavut Housing Corporation, Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Family Services to develop meaningful pathways for training and employment in the trades.

We believe investing in our people will pay for itself, reaping dividends in the future through the creation of a sustainable local construction industry.

(interpretation) By equipping Nunavummiut with the skills and opportunities needed to participate in building their own communities, we are fostering economic independence and reducing reliance on outside labour. By strengthening our own workforce, we will better meet the needs and aspirations of those who call Nunavut home.

All the people looking for work and getting work, it really affects Nunavut in a positive way, and so we want to support all of Nunavummiut to get more training in their own communities within Nunavut.

>> *Applause*

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, our government's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of Nunavummiut and ensuring their well-being is clearly reflected in today's budget.

From constructing much needed homes to expanding and simplifying access to services, we are making significant strides in creating a lasting impact that will benefit generations to come.

(interpretation) This budget is not just about numbers; it is about people, communities, and the future we are building together, and a future where no one is left behind and where opportunity and prosperity are within reach for all. We should be able to reach it, if we grab for it.

(interpretation ends) Yet the work is far from over, and so we will continue pursuing our Katujjiluta vision and showing the world that anything is possible when communities come together, and governments pursue productive partnerships to strive for ambitious yet achievable dreams.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker:** Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

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

#### **Member's Statement 715 – 6(2): Security Services at Health Centres**

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address concerns that keep arising with respect to security staff at the health centres in both of the communities that I represent.

Mr. Speaker, these are serious concerns for patients at the community health centres. One major barrier is the lack of understanding. Communication is missing because there are many medical clients who are only fluent in Inuktitut and cannot speak English.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known fact that the security staff at the health centres do not understand Inuktitut. This makes things much more difficult for patients.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is partly due to the difficulties in communication, but time and time again, constituents are telling me that they do not like how they are being treated by security staff. Staff not being able to understand clients is a huge barrier when my constituents are trying to access health care.

Mr. Speaker, the inability to communicate is leading to gaps in medical care. Security staff need to understand the needs of medical clients and support them.

Mr. Speaker, elders are more likely to need to be seen at the community health centres, and they are the ones who are more likely to speak only Inuktitut. Unfortunately, when the security staff don't understand the issue, medical clients are not getting the care they are requesting.

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I'll be asking questions about what kind of training is provided to health centre security staff so that they can better understand the needs of the community residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Member's Statement 716 – 6(2): Recognition of Adriana Kusugak**

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishment of longtime Rankin Inlet resident, Adriana Kusugak.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago Ms. Kusugak was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her contribution to education.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Kusugak was invited by the Governor General of Canada to a ceremony at the Rideau Hall to be recognized as an exemplary Canadian.

Adriana was recognized for empowering local communities and strengthening Inuit cultural connection by developing training programs that combine essential skills with traditional Inuit knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to note that Ms. Kusugak is the executive director of Ilitaqsiniq, an organization which is known and respected for delivering culture-based learning programs for Nunavummiut. Ilitaqsiniq has contributed to making a real substantial difference in the lives of children, youth, adults and families and local communities throughout Nunavut.

Earlier this sitting, I discussed the important work of this organization with its early year child education program, which accessed funds from Inuit First Child initiative to provide for such essential services as food security, health, baby essentials, and transportation for children and families in the communities of Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Baker Lake and Naujaat.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Kusugak on her medal, and wishing her continuing success in her ongoing work to make Nunavut a better place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*>>Applause*

**Speaker:** Member's Statement. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.



**Member's Statement 717 – 6(2): Hockey Tournament in Rankin Inlet**

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon, colleagues, and the people in my riding and the people of Nunavut.

At the weekend there was a hockey tournament in Rankin Inlet, ages 15, and they are in preparation for the Arctic Winter Games that are going to be coming later on. Coral Harbour and Naujaat paired together and formed a team and won. I'm very proud of them and I would like to congratulate these young people for winning the tournament. There were approximately 65 members of hockey teams that went to Rankin Inlet. I would like to congratulate Coral Harbour and Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Member's Statement 718 – 6(2): Celebration of the Return of the Sun**

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I would like to think about the Rangers who are looking for a young person currently, and I send my regards to the people of Igloolik and Arctic Bay.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to wish my thankfulness with my community. We celebrate the return of the sun, and we welcome the members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. David Akeagok, the Premier, Mr. P.J. Akeagok were able to attend the celebration, and they probably saw for the first time how the people of Igloolik welcome the return of sun. We celebrate it, and I would like to thank the two for entering those celebrations. Thank you.

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

**Member's Statement 719 – 6(2): Thank the Hunters for Providing Country Food**

**Ms. Killiktee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, and before I proceed with my remarks I would like to send my regards to the people of Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River and the people of Nunavut.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, and it's been quite some while now, but the current premier was then the president of Qikiqtani Inuit Association and he set up the Guardians of the Land. The Guardians of the Land, through the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, started developing, and these services had been implemented in both of my communities.

The Guardians are full-time hunters. They don't work in the office, but out on the land, and hunting and so on. And usually they have organized hunting parties for the whole community.

I would like to thank the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and I hope that this program goes on on an ongoing basis.

This winter the people of Qikiqtarjuaq went on fishing trips, hauling water for the community, and also bringing along young people who do not have role models to take them out hunting.

Right now in Qikiqtarjuaq the Guardians took a two-day trip to Clyde River and they arrived safely yesterday. There were some people from Clyde River who went to meet them half-way. What they are going to be doing in the community of Clyde River is to build qamutiqs. It has increased the skills of the people in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Member's Statement 720 – 6(2): Birthday Greetings (Gross)**

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** *Quana*, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to all the Nunavummiut that are here with us in the House and those listening across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, it's a special day for my family. It's my younger brother's birthday today. I want to wish him a very happy 30th birthday. Amos, we all love you and are so proud of you. You're such a wonderful father to my niece, Summer, and I thank you for being such a wonderful light to our family, and I wish you a wonderful decade ahead. All the best to you. I love you. Have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 721 – 6(2): Recognition of Ruth Stoddart Retirement**

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, and good afternoon, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize an individual from Baker Lake and who worked for energy corporation. She works in Baker Lake, and January 1, 2021 was her last day at that office of Qulliq Energy Corporation. She worked for quite a number of years. As I stated earlier, January 1 was her last day, and you don't have to follow this talk anymore, as you have retired now and you will be sewing anytime you want. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Item 3, Members' Statements. Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

### **Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**Mr. Savikataaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not very often that I rise to recognize. (interpretation ends) I would like to recognize my wife, Susan Savikataaq, and my grandson Steele Savikataaq, and my granddaughter, Annabella Savikataaq. Welcome to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's so nice to see Mr. Savikataaq's son. I send greetings from my grandson, Power (ph).

Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to recognize in this House my wife, Sandy Kusugak, who you will see here in this House often. Welcome to the Assembly. And sitting beside her, my secretary, Rowenda Kennedy (ph). Welcome to the Assembly.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker:** Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, Oral Questions.

Before we proceed with oral questions, I ask all members to please shorten your preambles for question and answer periods, as the last two days we had to extend the question period when there was too many or some members were missing. Most of you are here. Please shorten your preamble so we can get to everybody today.

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

### **Item 6: Oral Questions**

#### **Oral Question 1079 – 6(2): Transboundary Issues in the Kivalliq**

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and they concern the transboundary issues in the Kivalliq.

As the minister will recall, he participated in an announcement that was issued in late November of last year by the federal government concerning transboundary land claims in our region. This announcement quoted him as stating that the Government of Nunavut "is pleased with the progress and look forward to the successful finalization and ratification of the agreements. We will continue to be full partners in fulfilling the terms of these two new treaties in Nunavut."

Can the minister provide a clear update today on what specific actions the Government of Nunavut is required to take in order to fulfill the terms of these two new treaties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. P.J. Akeegok** (interpretation): I would like to thank my colleague. It is a great occasion, defining the boundary between parties of First Nations and Nunavut. The agreement that we are party to, along with federal government that have been the leading role on behalf of First Nations, and in view of the Dene.

I believe the question refers to we have fully participated and we were very pleased with the agreement and memorandum of understanding that we did sign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the announcement that was issued by the federal government and territorial governments last November indicated that the initialling of the Athabasca Denesūliné agreement and the Ghotelnene K'odtjneh Dene agreement will address these First Nations rights and benefits within their traditional territory in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Baker Lake and other Kivalliq communities deserve a clear, sorry. The residents of Baker Lake and other Kivalliq communities deserve clear answers about how this will impact their lives.

Can the minister clearly explain, clearly, what specific rights and benefits these groups will have in our territory, and can he clearly explain how these new entitlements will impact those that are held by our Inuit constituents in the region. Would that be land loss? Are we losing land? Are we losing rights to royalties? We need more clarification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. P.J. Akeegok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank my colleague. This is a very important milestone, and we have to hear from the First Nations and what they envision the First Nations he referred to at this moment. We are in continuing negotiations, and the memorandum of understanding moves us forward.

I agree with him the communities in Kivalliq need to be informed fully and have discussions, and we have two territories, the NWT and Nunavut, along with the Manitoba

government. And I believe more of the boundary issue relates to that. Information and so forth is something that should continue.

This is one of the first memorandum of understandings, and there will be others. And we'll continue to update the affected communities and constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have raised the importance of critical mineral development and a healthy mining sector on numerous occasions. What assurances can the minister provide the House today that signing of these new land claim agreements will not provide these outside groups with a veto over proposed new mining development Kivalliq region of Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you for your question.

We all looked at having self-government and we've always looked at how we can maintain more control. For that we've continued to lead, and not have Ottawa take the lead in these discussions.

The question we expect with First Nations and Inuit, that we will continue to have discussions and make decisions and along with other First Nations that we will have to continue to work with, with devolution we have, with continued discussions with Inuit organizations, the federal government, along with this Nunavut government this continued process, and any obstacles we may see, we have better expectations. We won't have obstacles.

We have these continued discussions. I cannot say at this time what the details may be, but we don't want to jeopardize any interest, and in particular to the question he raised on minerals in the area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1080 – 6(2): Staff Housing**

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to follow up on a topic raised by my colleague Mr. Hickes regarding the staff housing in Iqaluit. However, my questions will be posed to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the recent fire that saw dozens of families lose their home in Iqaluit, we recently received information provided by the government that indicated as of January 20, 2025 there were only six staff housing units in Iqaluit that were vacant and ready for occupancy.

Mr. Speaker, this means that filling critical positions in our health care system are at risk of further delay as a direct consequence of there being literally nowhere for new staff to live.

Mr. Speaker, the federal housing corporation, CMCH, also indicated in their last northern housing report that Iqaluit has had six consecutive years of near zero percent vacancy in the rental market.

I would like to ask can the minister indicate how the Nunavut Housing Corporation is working with the Department of Human Resources to address this sudden shortfall in the staff housing units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question from my colleague. Again, I apologize for the clarity of my voice, but I assure everybody that at this point it's not communicable anymore so everybody is safe.

Mr. Speaker, what we have been doing with human resources staff and within the housing corporation is trying to find as many units as we can, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately I think we've been very fortunate to get the units we've been able to get and move people into. It meant a lot of stick-handling, but before I move forward I would like to provide some numbers to the Iqaluit members.

There is a 24-unit development at the beach units, that's called, just down the street here, and they will be ready for occupancy by May 2025, including a mix of one- and two-bedroom units. There are about 14 designated for GN staff housing. Of that, there's also six units for the territorial corporation like QEC, and also four units for the City of Iqaluit out of that. The city of Iqaluit contributed financially to this project.

There's also a lease agreement in place for 30 units for GN staff units behind the Capital Suites, expected to have occupancy ready by September of 2025. Approximately 54 units we're talking about, in total, and we'll be trying to add as many as we can over the next six to eight months in the housing portfolio. I hope this helps my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I must apologize to the minister. In my haste to reduce my preamble, I forgot to congratulate the minister on his fourth budget address, as well as welcome the minister back to the House. I'm glad that he's in much better health now.

Again, I would like to thank the minister for providing that update. I think it's good that Iqaluit and departments across the GN are well informed on the plans for Nunavut Housing Corporation staff housing expansions.

Mr. Speaker, in October of 2023 the Nunavut Housing Corporation demolished three buildings, 538, 536, and 534, which all contained multiple staff housing units. Mr. Speaker, during our recent Fall Sitting we approved \$10 million to go towards the construction of new staff housing units, so I would like to ask the minister for my next question how many staff units does the Nunavut Housing Corporation intend on constructing in Iqaluit in the upcoming fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at creating a number of staff housing units for Iqaluit. It's unfortunate we had to demolish those units, but it was a matter of old buildings that needed to be replaced and put bigger units into those areas. I just had that figure before me. I just misplaced that, the detail in that number. I'll try to find it and get back to my colleague before the day is over. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lightstone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister for that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, the government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that almost 40 percent of positions in Iqaluit are vacant, including nearly 300 positions in the Department of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to point out the need for the government to recommit itself to the construction of new staff housing units, particularly here in Iqaluit, and more importantly, end the practice of leasing as opposed to building.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to encourage the Government of Nunavut as well as the federal government to build instead of take units away. Again, as I previously mentioned, this is the sixth year in a row that Iqaluit has had near zero residence on the residential market and we really need to make a dent in this housing shortfall. I would like to ask, will the minister commit to acting on this recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the staff housing envelope across Nunavut, there is a dire need for more staff housing. I get it that Iqaluit has zero vacancy rates and so do other communities in the territory. Staff housing is vital for creating employment opportunities from the government in all communities in Nunavut. There are many communities in Nunavut without any staff housing, and it's always a challenge for the corporation to see where we can put as many staff housing as possible. We will continue to try to do better in that.

In terms of removing existing staff housing to put new ones, that's never the goal or objective of our government, but sometimes it's cheaper and actually faster to do so.

I commit that we will continue to try to find ways to get more staff housing in Iqaluit, if it's through rental or building ourselves. We will continue to try to find creative ways to ensure that staff housing issues are dealt with.

We know how important staff housing is in communities, especially in terms of health care and so on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1081 – 6(2): Igloolik Power Plant**

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

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, Igloolik's power plant has been in operation for half a century. As the minister will recall, the Qulliq Energy Corporation submitted an application in February 2021 for the construction of a new power plant for Igloolik. In April 2024, the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued a request for proposals for the design and construction of a new power plant for Igloolik. Information published by the government indicates that Pilitak Enterprises was recently selected as the successful proponent in November 2024. This is a good step.

Can the minister provide an update today on the timeline for the construction of Igloolik's new power plant. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for my colleague for the questions on the Igloolik power plant. We're very pleased that we had signed a contract for a



successful proponent in the member's comments. Pilitak Enterprises was recently selected, that they will be constructing Igloolik's new power plant.

In terms of when the construction will begin, I don't have that information in front of me at this time. We have to abide by the legislation and processes that we need to abide by when we deal with land selection, but I will find out exactly when this construction will begin. But at this time we're now working on the process with Pilitak Enterprises, after they have signed the contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for your response. I know that there's some issues, if you work on the things that we need not to stop or delay.

(interpretation ends) The Qulliq Energy Corporation's 2021 application indicated that the cost of constructing a new power plant for Igloolik would be approximately 35 million. That was almost five years ago. Can the minister indicate how much has been budgeted for the construction of Igloolik's new power plant.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Since that original estimate, the cost of building new power plants has gone up significantly, similar to other capital projects since the pandemic. We saw strong inflation unfortunately, which meant for Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Arctic Energy Fund, and the number of power plants that we could build with the existing funding kept on shrinking, getting smaller and smaller.

I don't have that exact figure in terms of the budget for the Igloolik power plant. However, I can say that in order to award that contract, the budget has been secured, and so the project will be proceeding with Pilitak Enterprises as the contractor.

We are working to make sure, we know that Igloolik has been waiting for this power plant, and we are working diligently to make sure that there are no delays and that we are examining every opportunity to expedite the work towards construction. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Quassa** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister as well. I urge the minister to make sure there are no delays and make sure that you review and resolve the issues.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, Igloolik's community arena was recently destroyed by fire. It is my understanding that the Qulliq Energy Corporation was required to perform an emergency power shutdown during the incident, due to the power plant's proximity to the arena.

Can the Minister indicate if the Qulliq Energy Corporation is considering a new location for the community's new power plant. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the location in Igloolik and with that recent fire, we were quite concerned and we were very fortunate that the wind direction, my understanding is that might have helped us a bit. My staff at Qulliq Energy Corporation were preparing plans, should we have to undertake any repairs.

I believe we are looking for a new location for the power plant. However, in terms of the specific area in which we are looking, those are all being worked on at the technical levels. Also, as mentioned previously last week, we do also make sure that local governments as well as other organizations are consulted as to potential locations.

Again, I apologize, that's another specific item I can commit to getting back to the member on, along with those previous requests that she made to me. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1082 – 6(2): Decentralization**

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier of Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) As the member of the Legislative Assembly for Aivilik, I represent two non-decentralized communities that have limited employment opportunities for my constituents. As the premier will recall, minister mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022.

The premier's own letter indicates that one of his priorities has been to "review the current status of decentralized, establish key goal and objective for improving decentralized, and develop and update decentralized action plan with the support of the Department of Human Resources."

Mr. Speaker, as the premier will recall, he tabled the decentralized review report in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2024. Can the premier indicate when he will be tabling the government's formal response to the recommendations contained in the report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank the member for his question in regards to asking questions of decentralize in the community. The report was tabled and it has not been reviewed since 2014, and we had tabled the report into the Legislative Assembly.

We had reviewed this outside of the government, and I'm very pleased that we're able to table it in November as a government.

We expect during this session that this winter that I'll be able to table that report, but I expect to see the tabling of that document sometime during this session. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also thank you, Mr. Premier.

(interpretation ends) One of the recommendations contained in the decentralized review report is to "continue to consider the need for any dysfunction headquarters offices to be moved from community to Iqaluit or our regional centre."

Can the premier indicate if the government accepts this recommendation, and can he indicate what specific offices are being actively considered for relocation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I also thank my colleague for his question as well.

We are looking at how we can provide more employment to the smaller communities, but the report, we had a consultant do a review on the dysfunctional and functional headquarters assessed earlier on that I will be tabling a document, and the responses will

be in that report at that time. I expect that I will be tabling a document during this sitting or during this session.

We are working very hard to make sure that the larger communities and smaller communities will be assisted. We are working on this diligently. Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, the decentralized review report addressed the impact of government's new Nunavut-wide hiring policy. The report indicates that:

“The new Nunavut-wide hiring policy is not a mechanism to permanently relocate a position or a group of positions to different communities, which has long been an objective of decentralization. The policy does not, however, recognize the value of even one or more positions placed in a community with potential for priority hiring of Inuk.”

Can the premier indicate today how many of the residents of Naujaat and Coral Harbour have been hired to date under this policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my colleague for his question. According to my understanding, this policy is trying to have more priority for hiring of Inuk. We have been working very hard, diligently to make sure that we provide positions in the communities. I know that some communities do want to have the positions in the community.

At this time for Naujaat and Coral Harbour, I don't have the figures at this time, but I will get back to the member on the figures. I will provide that information during this session, once I get the information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1083 – 6(2): Medevac Planes in the Kivalliq Regions**

**Mr. Savikataaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Before I get on to my question, I would like to wish our Lillian Savikataaq a special date today, her birthday, and everyone give her the special treatment she deserves on her day today.

>> *Applause*

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the Minister of Health concerning medevacs in Arviat. I have been informed by some of my constituents that at times it takes a long while to get a medevac into Arviat, once a medevac has been called for, and I don't want to hear from the minister about the weather, because we all know that, yes, there are weather delays and no one can do nothing about that.

Can I ask the minister: Are the medevacs in Arviat in general taking longer now than they were before, from the time a medevac is called for until the time a medevac plane is on the ground in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for asking the question. Thank you to my colleague for asking the questions. For the medevac, we call them medevacs in English, they are very important services for Arviat and other communities. No wonder when we're worried about someone or people are going through hardships, whether you're young people or elders, and whenever they need to be sent out by air, it's a very important service.

The airlines that we charter are Keewatin Air Limited and we always work with them. And as to whether there was a late plane that was supposed to go to Arviat, I haven't been notified. But we work closely with the airlines. And whenever anything needs to be corrected or if there's a problem, we work with the airline's representatives to find ways to improve their services.

A good example would be a new airline that are using jets. They started being utilized more last year, and it has helped the communities in the Keewatin as well. So we're always looking for ways to improve the services, along with the airlines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Savikataaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not asking whether the jets are being used or not. I know they don't go to Arviat, that the Minister is referring to. My question was medevacs that need to be shipped out that are late (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, since the minister is talking about other things I didn't ask about, I'll ask the minister, then, what's the average time in Arviat for a medevac plane from when the nurse deems that a medevac is needed and the call is made, until the medevac plane arrives in Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to my colleague for asking the questions.

(interpretation ends) Medevacs are, when we look at medevacs in say Kivalliq region, at any given time there may be multiple patients waiting for a medevac, and the way that the system and the contract is set up with the medevac provider is there's a number of levels that are set, depending on a client's condition. So those are referred to as C tasks (ph), I can't remember the exact wording, but between a level one and five. And so those levels are used so that the highest priority patient is picked up first.

So at the end of the day, say if you have three different health centres who are waiting for a medevac, who have a patient waiting to leave the community, the amount that the patient waits can vary, and the system is designed in a way so that the highest priority patients will have the shortest waiting time. We do run into situations where there's a surge, and it can be quite some time before a medevac client is evacuated from the community.

But those levels are what the contractor goes by, and those levels are informed by the health professional who's looking after the client. And so I hope that helps to explain a little bit. A medevac is not just a medevac. There's a medevac for a very high priority patient, the highest level, and there's a medevac which is a lower priority.

I think the best way to summarize my response is that it can vary. The amount of time that you're waiting for a medevac can vary based on a number of different factors. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Savikataaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the explanation.

(interpretation ends) But I assume that when a medevac is needed that it's a serious situation, and I've heard from my constituents that it seems to be taking longer than it used to. If the demand is there for more medevacs, then I would encourage the Health to talk to their partners there that has a medevac, Kivalliq Air or Keewatin Air. Maybe there needs to be more planes available.

I'll ask the minister a last question here. To the best of his knowledge, has anyone in Arviat's health or condition deteriorated quite badly because the medevac plane could not get to Arviat on a timely basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) That's a really difficult question to answer. I would like to provide the best response I can. In terms of delays to medevacs and impacts to health, that's a relationship that exists, and, you know, in a

scenario where we have, say, inclement weather and a medevac is unable to land due to weather, there are absolutely potential impacts to patient health. And that's where the Department of Health works so closely with the contract providers, Keewatin Air, to monitor things like the wait times for patients.

The volumes, Mr. Speaker, volumes are increasing year over year, and it's something that the contractor has been working to manage, including bringing on new aircraft. And I think that's where I was mentioning new aircraft in terms of being able to respond quicker.

If the member would like, if there's a specific incident or a specific individual who has a concern, we're more than willing to look into that and to deal with the client and/or their family. The service that Keewatin Air is providing is absolutely vital to Nunavummiut's health, and Department of Health really appreciates the work they do to support Nunavummiut in some very challenging situations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Oral Question 1084 – 6(2): Chesterfield Inlet Power Plant**

**Mr. Sammurtok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are to the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation.

As the minister will recall, I asked a number of questions during the Legislative Assembly's recent Fall Sitting concerning the Qulliq Energy Corporation's plan to replace one of the generator sets at Chesterfield Inlet plant.

In September of last year the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued a request for proposal for the design, manufacture, supply and installation of a new generator set. Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this procurement process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This procurement process is proceeding for Chesterfield Inlet component that the member is asking about. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Sammurtok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Chesterfield Inlet's current power plant will celebrate its 50th birthday this year, half a century of hard work.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, the Utility Rates Review Council issued a report in the year of 2022 recommending that the Qulliq Energy Corporation's applications to construct a new power plant in Chesterfield Inlet and Kugaaruk be approved. However, the projects were cancelled by the government due to lack of funding.

Can the minister provide a clear update today on the status of his efforts to secure additional federal funding for the construction of a new power plant in Chesterfield Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague for asking questions about that, because we need more help from the federal government, and we have told them that a number of times. We have to work with different government departments in federal government, and we have been told the same story to many different representatives. Like for example, Chesterfield Inlet is a very good example of aged infrastructure that when we're forced to use very old power stations, they generally cause more problems. And we have told the federal government that.

The Arctic Energy Fund that was announced with 75 million in it, I believe it has already been depleted, and they say they're running out of money. And if we do get more money to build, we've told them if we get new funding we'll be able to build power plants. The government still hasn't said here's the money. Our president is now in Ottawa and has gone there a number of times to press for this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Sammurtok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) It is my understanding that the Government of Nunavut is currently involved in a project to design and construct a new hydro-electric power source for the capital City of Iqaluit, which already has a modern power plant. This project may cost over half a billion dollars. Why is the project of higher priority than replacing ageing power plants in smaller Nunavut communities like Chesterfield Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague.  
(interpretation ends) Iqaluit hydro project is being lead by Nunavut Nukkiksautiit



Corporation. They are an arm of Inuit Development Corporation. It's not the Qulliq Energy Corporation that's leading that project. However, we are interested in supporting renewable energy anywhere in Nunavut that would help reduce fuel consumption and mitigate our carbon footprint.

From where we sit, replacing the power plant in Chesterfield Inlet is absolutely still a priority. It's a needed project that we're going to keep working towards finding money for. We were so happy to award the contracts in Igloolik, Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven. We're working hard on Kugluktuk. That negotiation. But we know that Chester residents are concerned. We know Kugaaruk residents are concerned. We're trying to play catch-up here to our existing ageing infrastructure.

And so for clarity, we're not leading the Iqaluit hydro project. And from Qulliq Energy Corporation's Chesterfield is still a priority (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1085 – 6(2): Homeownership Programs**

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to ask questions to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Mr. Speaker, it has to do with a meeting I held in my constituency of Uqqummiut. I had a homeowners meeting. This was an excellent opportunity to hear their concerns about programs and services and everybody except two homeowners showed up, and they were able to express their concerns about programs and services in Qikiqtarjuaq.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm rising here is I would like to first speak about elders. Elders started having private homeowners in the late 1980s or early '90s, and today many of these elders are in their '70s and '80s. The reason I would like to ask questions about that is they live on a fixed income, and they only get paid once a month. They face many difficulties in keeping up with the cost of homeownership.

I recognize that housing corporation has recently introduced a new elder housing program, and also an annual preventative maintenance grant.

Can the minister indicate how many residents of Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River have been approved for benefits under the new elders housing program, and also making sure that they have applied for the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you very much for that question. And I would also like to thank the committee and your involvement in those dialogues. We

have programs that are being made for potential homeowners and homeowners. I don't have it in front of me, but I'll be able to give you a copy of the form and the program we have quite a lot of requests coming into our office. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard concerns from private homeowners in both of the communities that I represent. We would like to make sure that we have the information going out to the homeowners. This is a very excellent program for private homeowners to do home repair, renovations and so on.

In regards to those forms, there's quite a lot of people who fill out the applications. The work gets initiated and then they leave before the completion of the project. And usually we don't have the contractors or the businesses who can work on these homes.

(interpretation ends) Can the minister describe how the Nunavut Housing Corporation works with private homeowners and local organizations to conduct inspections and ensure that approved home repair and renovation projects are completed on budget and on time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to hear your question. Usually what we hear quite often that the work is approved, but they don't complete the project. There is a lack of contractors or carpenters in the smaller communities, and there's quite a lot of lack of services. I was just in Baker Lake not too long ago and Taloyoak and Cambridge Bay. We hear quite often about projects not being completed.

If there's no journeymen or carpenters available, if there's no one available to change the windows or the doors and there's no workmen in that community, we hear members making suggestions to have housing corporation get some contractors, carpenters and so on, that can work on those projects that need completion in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Killiktee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you and that's very interesting, but we have to keep bringing it up in order to get this problem area completed.

As the minister is aware, the 2025 Nunavut Housing Forum will be held in the spring, in June this year. (interpretation ends) I believe that would be an important opportunity for

Nunavut Housing Corporation to hear directly from the local organizations about the administration of the homeownership programs in the communities.

Will the minister commit to ensure that representatives from local housing organizations in Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq are able to participate in this meeting.

(interpretation) I would also like to add that we would like to have the participants and representatives from Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, in that Nunavut Housing Forum, we will be inviting our representatives from housing organizations.

I'm looking at March 12 to go to Clyde River with my staff, and on March 13 we will be going to Qikiqtarjuaq. We would like to have meetings with the local housing authorities.

I'm very pleased that we're going to be meeting with those representatives, and that was on the invitation that you extended to our organization.

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

#### **Oral Question 1086 – 6(2): Security Services at Health Centres**

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, in my member statement I spoke of the communication barrier between security staff at the community health centres and medical clients who are trying to access services.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an overview of what language requirements are currently in place for community health centre security staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) And I thank the member for the question.

The security staffing situations that we have, or arrangements that we have, different communities vary. Some of our security staff are contracted services through the existing contract with Scarlet Security, and then some of our staff are Government of Nunavut

employees, and so there are different positions and different employers, depending on the community.

In most situations, the Department of Health places a high priority on the ability to speak Inuktitut. Security services is no exception. There are a number of modules, community guards and enhanced guards. These are the two job titles. Enhanced guard positions are contract positions which require the ability in handling violent or potentially explosive situations, including training that's typically provided to law enforcement, and community guards work alongside those enhanced guards in some health centres.

So there are a number of different modules that are provided to security guards, including Introduction to Inuktitut for those who don't speak Inuktitut.

However, staff who already speak Inuktitut, Inuit staff are not required to take those modules. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Department of Health currently contracts security services for all Nunavut communities except for three, and I would like to thank the minister for providing additional information on the security services in health care facilities who chose that nine communities hire local security staff, and that 28 locally-hired security staff members have completed training programs.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate what steps have been taken, if any, to provide cultural orientation and Inuktitut language training to security staff who are contracted from outside of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question.

I will add to my previous response. So the training modules that are provided to guards through our contractor include fire suppression, cultural awareness, Indigenous cultural competency, introduction to Inuktitut – I just mentioned that one – Inuit societal values, non-violent crisis intervention, public relations, report writing, and security training.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that we are making progress in terms of developing more capacity in Nunavut, in terms of the local staff.

The enhanced guards are providing mentorship opportunities to community guards, which is something we're quite excited about. The plan through this mentorship route is

to see more and more Nunavummiut and Nunavut Inuit filling the roles in the important security function at our health facilities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Quqqiaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the communication problems between security staff and local medical clients has been raised as an issue by a number of my constituents. I worry that it is causing a gap in medical services being delivered to those who need it.

Mr. Speaker, according to the information provided by the minister, I note that there are no local community staff contracted to provide security at Kugaaruk and Taloyoak community health centres.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to addressing the need for security staff who understand Inuktitut and appreciate the cultural environment of the communities in my constituencies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am worried when my colleague is worried. I'm a professional worrier, some people would say.

But in all seriousness, I am concerned to hear about the member's reference to gaps in medical care or barriers to medical care. That's not the intention of the security service. We're trying to make sure our facilities are safe, make sure they are welcoming, make sure that our staff as well as other patients are not impacted by violent incidents or destruction of property, which unfortunately we're seeing an increasing prevalence in past years, and that's why we've had to invest in this security service.

My understanding is that there is a search for local staff to work at that health centre, and that will continue in terms of looking for someone to fulfil the community guard role.

One final note, Mr. Speaker. We've noted there's a relationship between our ability to fill our positions at health centres and the issues around security. So if we can provide a safe environment, we're more likely to hold onto our existing employees and recruit new ones.

But if our facilities are not safe, then that relationship goes the other way, and it's a critical function for our health system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Oral Question 1087 – 6(2): Caribou Management in the Kitikmeot**

**Mr. Anavilok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, everyone. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment, and they concern the important issue of the caribou management in Kitikmeot.

Mr. Speaker, in April of 2024 the minister's department issued a public service announcement concerning the closure of the Dolphin Union caribou harvest in Kugluktuk. The department's announcement indicated that the community's total harvest of 105 caribou was "established to support the recovery of the Dolphin Union population. It is a critical piece in the co-management efforts to allow the herd to recover and provide harvesting opportunities for the future."

When I raised this issue during our recent Fall Sitting, the minister's predecessor informed me that his department was in the process of analyzing its most recent population survey of the herd, and that a final report would be "provided to the co-management partners."

Can the minister confirm the results of the population survey, and will he commit to tabling a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, the current total allowable harvest for the Dolphin and Union herd at 105 was based on 2020's survey results that happened at the time.

And Mr. Speaker, the department completed an arial population survey in October and November 2023, and these results estimate the population is now at 5,229 caribou, and is not statistically different from the 2020 estimates which were estimated at 3,850.

The final report has been provided to the "management partners" back in December 2024.

For the tabling aspect of this, I'll work with my officials to see if we can do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Anavilok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that. In May 2024, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board issued its decision concerning the request by Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization to increase the total allowable harvest of Bluenose-East caribou herd from 170 to 450, and to remove the non-quota limitation

requiring that the level of female harvest be less than or equal to 50 percent of the total allowable harvest.

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

Can the minister provide an update today on his department's work with partners like the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization to manage this caribou population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment does work closely with our co-management partners, including each hunters and trappers association, as well as other partners such as the Government of Northwest Territories, since these herds do share transboundary.

Mr. Speaker, we can on a continual basis consult with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and we'll continue to be guided through our discussions with them on making decisions around caribou management into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Anavilok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister, for that. During last week's sitting of Legislative Assembly, I spoke about concerns that have been raised by the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers organization regarding the potential impact of the proposed Grays Bay Road and Port project on caribou herds in the region.

Can the Minister of Environment describe how his department will be participating in the Nunavut Impact Review Board's upcoming consideration of the proposed Grays Bay Road and Port project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I encourage my colleague's local Kugluktuk Angoniatit to continue working with such entities as the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board and to voice their concerns on this.

Mr. Speaker, with the Grays Bay Port environmental assessment that's going to be ensuing, my department will be fully involved to ensure that Nunavut's environment and the wildlife contained within are considered on all aspects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Oral Question 1088 – 6(2): Airport Infrastructure**

**Ms. Nutarak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, who is beside me.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, I raised concerns with him one year ago during our winter sitting regarding the urgent need to repair the fencing around Pond Inlet's airport. At that time I noted that the fencing around the airport was not in good condition, which resulted in situations where animals, people and vehicles were endangering themselves and others by crossing the airstrip and being in unsafe areas.

Can the minister confirm that work to repair the fencing has been successfully completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague beside me for the question.

With respect to funding, I can't respond. We have to view the overall project and I'll be able to respond then. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Nutarak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and the minister. We'll wait for the response.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, his department's first 20-year airport infrastructure needs assessment recommended that:

"A feasibility study be undertaken to determine the cause and benefits of constructing a new high Arctic hub airport at Pond Inlet for civil and military purposes."

The report also identified Pond Inlet as a "site of strategic military importance on the Northwest Passage."

Mr. Speaker, the world has changed dramatically in the last few months, and the need for Canada to assert its sovereignty has never been greater.

Mr. Speaker, I fully understand that the Minister does not have \$100 million in his wallet to immediately pay for the development of a new capable hub airport at Pond Inlet. Can he confirm what discussions he has had with the federal ministers of transportation and



national defence to identify the resources necessary to achieve this strategic objective.  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)  
The world has changed, and had has changed very significantly.

I want to thank our premier for leading throughout Canada's premiers in terms of what else can be done, and in terms of the Arctic sovereignty and also the Arctic security is up foremost right now in terms of the eyes of the world. It's something that we're going to continue to advocate for, whether if it's through our premier to the prime minister and myself with my federal counterparts. Those discussions are very lively right now.

We continue to advocate that our borders need to be protected, not just focus on the southern border, but also the northern border. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Nutarak** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. (interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, he recently tabled his department's updated 20-Year Airport Capital Needs Assessment.

The report identifies a number of immediate issues with the current airport, including the need for a major overlay of the taxiway and apron.

Can the minister confirm when the work will be done, begin. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the actual overlay is one that escapes me right now, in terms of the notes that I have here, but I will be very pleased to update my colleague on any of those updates through correspondence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): I would like to move to extend our Question Period.  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Members seeking unanimous consent to extend Question Period. Are there any nays? There are none. Question Period extended to another 30 minutes.

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

**Oral Question 1089 – 6(2): Canada Disability Benefits**

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, members. I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Family Services on the topic of Canada Disability Benefit.

Mr. Speaker, as everyone's aware, last May the minister made a minister's statement here in the House, and in it stated that she plans to continue the discussion with Minister Khara when we meet at our Ministers Responsible for Social Services Forum later this year in advocating for increased funding.

I would appreciate if the minister could give us an update on those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Honourable Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your question. I'm not very clear with your initial question. Could you repeat, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Mr. Hickes, please repeat your question for clarity.

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to the minister. I kind of read it out of order.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm asking for is in a minister's statement last year, the minister stated that she had advocated for increased funding for our government under the Canada Disability Benefit, and I'd like to get the outcome of those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for your question. At this time the status is for disability benefits. On the increasing of funding, especially through the Department of Family Services, we have been reviewing this constantly.

And during our review, or recent review, we had identified where else we'll be able to provide benefits for the people with disability through education, through income support. So we're still reviewing those parts today. So that's the status today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do know that currently people are eligible up to \$175 a month through the Canada Disability Benefit, and thankfully that is not clawed back, and I know the minister committed to continuing that practice.

To update the House and the members of the public, as of July 25th, according to the Canada website, the amount will be increasing to \$200 a month and adjusted for inflation going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the second question I would like to talk about also mentioned in the minister's statement of the day the minister stated that she also had the opportunity to discuss the challenges disabled Nunavummiut face in their daily lives. I would also like to get a summarization and list of any improvements or progress on any of those challenges. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also thank you, Member, for your question in regards to the people on how to increase the funding for disability benefits.

We have been working very hard. We have been pushing the federal government very hard. Also, with the ministers' conference, as Nunavut we have been pushing forward to make sure that we are unique in Nunavut, because the people with disability programs and services are very late and they're way behind through education, through income support and also through employment.

So we're urging them to make sure that they are priority, especially if they need support if their are patients. We have been very vocal about this, and they had mentioned that, and we have been very vocal.

We heard that Canada had heard our voice, but to date they have not replied as to what kind of programs or increases we'll get. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do look forward to further updates on some of those discussions.

Mr. Speaker, I know the elder vans has been a topic of discussion on a number of fronts in this House and out in the public.

I would like to ask the minister has there been any discussions with Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs that the elder vans with wheelchair access across the territory that are being provided would also be provided for all people with mobility issues in the communities that those vans are located in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Hon. Margaret Nakashuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your question. As well, we've had concerns in regards to those people with disabilities and elders, how we can provide more support at the community level. We have discussed this, but not in detail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

### **Oral Question 1090 – 6(2): Arctic Sovereignty**

**Mr. Kaernerck** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Premier of Nunavut in regards to Arctic sovereignty and protection of sovereignty.

During the meeting in February 2021, a member from Sanirajak had asked questions in regard to this issue, if they can look at Iqaluit as being the army base.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, on February 10, correct me if I'm wrong, the Conservative PC leader, the premier can say yes or no, did he inform you ahead of time, did he tell you that if they're elected that they would construct a military base in Iqaluit? Can the premier identify, did he meet with the PC leader. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my colleague for his question as well. His federal opposition, I'm not sure how you say it in Inuktitut, but I'm sure we all heard that he will be arriving on Internet. But he did not tell me or notify me that he'll be arriving here, and he did not inform me as about what kind of information he will be talking about. He did not inform us.

But when I was in Ottawa I asked if I could meet with him and when I'm in Ottawa, so I met with him later on, after he came to Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kaernerck:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for that. But it's unfortunate that the Conservative was not seen that Nunavut is a territory.

And saying that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask on the topic of Arctic sovereignty, in terms of critical minerals, as we've been seeing on the news that the USA is trying to have a mineral agreement with the Ukraine.

Now, in saying that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask when it comes to these Arctic security corridors, which is the Grays Bay Road and Port projects, which has the full support of our members here, and that is an "Inuit driven project."

Mr. Speaker, I have been advocating for Amittuq to be a regional hub when it comes to emergencies, security, and sovereignty. So will the premier agree with me when it comes to these critical minerals, and not to mention the climate change, that Amittuq will be seen, the communities will be seeing the North of 60. Will the premier elaborate with the other federal counterparts to have Sanirajak to be recognized as a hub, in terms of sovereignty and security. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for that question. He is absolutely right, we are at a moment in time where energy security, access to critical minerals are top of mind, not only for northerners, not only for Canadians, but the world, as we're seeing the potential tariff threats that be imposed on us as a country.

As such, I've been advocating extensively for the inclusion of Arctic security and sovereignty, and I want to thank my colleague for having really published that hard right here in this House, in terms of seeing investments come to the territory that allow either healthy communities are really directed to search and rescue or defence.

The member had asked in terms of critical minerals. We're very fortunate to have Baffinland, which is identified as a critical mineral, here in this territory. That is a big employer for not only the region, but the territory and the country. That's something that I have mentioned during my engagements right to the First Ministers' meeting, through FMM, and that we need to see those projects as our backbone of our economy.

As such, to the member's question, yes, I continue to push hard to see investments, not specifically just to Amittuq, but all three of the territories in terms of ability to bring infrastructure and capabilities into the territory.

As mentioned most recently, just a few days ago, I had a call with the Prime Minister as well as Minister Blair, who was there along with all the premiers, where we discussed Arctic security and sovereignty. And it's through those forums that I will continue to advocate and push for any investment that comes to the North, North of 60 I think he's referenced. It's right across the territory. And I'll keep pushing for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kaerner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you for your response as well, Mr. Speaker.

As the member had stated for Sanirajak, that this would create employment opportunities. As our younger generation, our future, how and what kind of plans does the government have. Like for the communities that are non-decentralized, could they be your priority in the smaller communities when there's limited employment opportunities for our youth, because our youth is our future.

Can the premier tell me how he's been reviewing this, and can he make it a priority for Amittuq looking at the other three regions, because Amittuq is quite central to the three regions, if you can identify, as you stated looking, at the whole as Nunavut as a whole.

So I would like, I urge you to look at the Amittuq region, because it's quite centre of the three regions. And there's also an airstrip that's been reconstructed. So have you ever considered that and relayed that to the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my colleague for his question. Inuit organizations, especially the objectives, we're working very hard to make sure, especially for Nunavummiut, Inuit interests to make sure, and the values. I wanted to mention that as well after I respond to his earlier question.

In regards to my colleague's question, we are now reviewing the details of this. We've also identified search and rescue and I responded to some of the questions that were posed. He had requested that Amittuq area to be looked at, but the federal government is not reviewing this, in regards to the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1091 – 6(2): Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan**

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the new Minister of Environment, and they concern the issue of the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan.

Mr. Speaker, after decades of work, the draft plan was submitted to the federal Minister of Northern Affairs, the territorial Minister of Environment, and the President of Nunavut Tunngavik back in 2023, which is almost two years ago. Since that time all three office holders have changed with retirements, resignations, and elections.

Can the new minister confirm what direct discussions he has had to date with the newly elected president of Nunavut Tunngavik and the current federal Minister of Northern Affairs regarding the Draft Land Use Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question.

Mr. Speaker, the recommended Nunavut Land Use Plan is of course still under review, and as such I have not had the opportunity to engage with my colleagues at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated or my federal counterparts on this specific file. I do know that all parties do want to come to the same conclusion, and we hope that we'll come forward with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a little bit frustrating for me. I know I've asked about the land use plan at least five times to at least three different ministers, and I can't say for sure how many times I've been told that it's currently under review. It's really frustrating to hear that, considering how long and how much work has been put into the development of that plan by Nunavummiut across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to know is, what's not clear is who exactly is doing the day-to-day detailed work on behalf of the three parties. It's important to recognize that it makes a significant difference if the process is being led by public servants, employees, or outside consultants. And I'm speaking to the issue of this being under review, this ongoing under review.

Can the minister confirm who the lead representative is for the federal government, the territorial government, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in Nunavut in the Nunavut Land Use Plan review process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, with the plan still under review, parties are working closely to align their recommendations, and the three parties are aiming to arrive at a joint recommendation. I know that they meet regularly on particular issues to discuss.

As for the specific representatives that are involved, I do know that the Government of Nunavut has a number of people on the working group, but maybe I'll have to get back to the member as to the specifics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've acknowledged on a number of occasions that there are many complexities and competing considerations in this process, and many of my colleagues have also spoken about the challenge of balancing environmental protection and habitat preservation with economic development and resource extraction.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quote directly from a message that I got from one of my constituents just the other day. He said:

“The plan represents a milestone in the effort to balance visions of Nunavut. It is a testament to the determination and resilience of the Inuit communities whose voices are instrumental in shaping a sustainable future for the territory. And by considering traditional knowledge and cultural values, the plan ensures that rich heritage and resources of Nunavut are preserved for generations to come.”

He ended that by saying:

“If the plan is not passed, those efforts will be lost.”

And it is time to pass the plan now, Mr. Speaker.

And what I would like to ask the minister to tell us now is to provide a clear explanation today of what specific issues remain unresolved as part of the review process, and can he provide a clear indication as to whether the process is expected to conclude prior to the dissolution of the current Assembly in September of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Joanasie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member for bringing those words and pressing on this.

Mr. Speaker, the land use plan of course has gone through multiple phases and revisions. It has taken decades to get to where we are now.

We're not taking it lightly, I'll say that. The parties may choose to reject the plan, either jointly or individually, but must also provide written reasons to the Planning Commission for consideration, and Nunavut Planning Commission will then have one opportunity to submit a revised plan to the parties for decision.



So for specific issues that have come about, and those are still yet to be resolved, and that's where we're still under review.

But I'll say that for the purpose of the review, it's to ensure that the plan balances many interests that have worked so hard on this plan, factors such as the Nunavut agreement of course, which is the basis, conservation, transportation corridors and as well as responsible development in our territory.

So with that, we'll continue to try to balance as best we can all parties involved, many stakeholders at play. I look forward to bringing updates on this with my colleagues in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 1092 – 6(2): Seniors Strategy Progress Report**

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken a number of times in this House on the Nunavut Elders and Seniors Strategy that was tabled almost a year ago. In a couple weeks, it will be a year.

I would like to get an update, Mr. Speaker, as we're still waiting for an action plan that the minister has stated will not be forthcoming, that there will be updates waiting. When is the next update going to be provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

**Hon. P.J. Akeegok:** I thank my colleague for his continued questions around this very important issue. I am hoping to provide a progress report this coming sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way I see that, it's not going to be coming until the May sitting? Or this current sitting? The premier is nodding his head this current sitting. I very much look forward to that being tabled, and I hope it's not the last day.

Mr. Speaker, in the premier's message within his strategy, in his opening comments, he states:

“When it comes to elders, time is running out. That sense of urgency is something that our government has heard loud and clear from elders. We need to act now to make the lives of Nunavut elders better.”

Mr. Speaker, it also states:

“It will take working across all departments to meet the urgent needs of our elders.”

My next question to the Minister responsible for Seniors is to ask: Has all associated departments submitted their updates to the strategy so that it can be tabled in this House very soon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank my colleague for his question. Yes, the updates will come from the departments as identified.

Further, I just want to recognize just in the budget today we are allocating resources to bring in resources to the departments so we could have a secretariat, which we’re very happy to continue to see, as we work around providing a whole-of-government approach to this very important issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I’m sure we’ll all have a number of questions on that secretariat during Committee of the Whole or during other venues.

Mr. Speaker, in the document it also speaks that one of the most serious issues raised by elders at the regional elders gatherings was the extreme level of abuse and intimidation many of them were experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, elders said they were living with abuse almost every day, and they feel trapped and unable to escape. With regards to this priority, can the minister update this House on what specific initiatives have been brought forward and actioned on this topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Hon. P.J. Akeeagok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, I am preparing a report specifically to the different action items that have been identified, and what we heard document and all the action items the work that we’re hoping to do, and it is through that I will provide an update at the appropriate time when I table the progress report in terms of that. So I really appreciate the member’s question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Oral Question 1093 – 6(2): Nunavut-Wide Hiring Policy**

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me again. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Human Resources about the Nunavut-wide hiring policy. As it has come into effect, how many smaller community jobs have been created. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. In terms of the accurate numbers for the Nunavut-wide hiring policy, not all of our communities have people that are working across the territory under this policy, but we have three outside of Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So are all the communities being looked at to see using the Nunavut-wide hiring policy to get to hire people in the communities? What sort of policy is followed when hirings are made? 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.

So we have the three communities outside of Iqaluit; Rankin, Igloolik and Arviat, where people are hired under the Nunavut-wide hiring policy, and we have four more applications that are in progress.

For the Nunavut-wide hiring policy, it solely depends on the department to bring those applications forward to go through the requests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the smaller communities that are not decentralized, like, I have really pushed hard to try and get jobs created in those communities, and I've asked the premier about this a number of times. So will the policy be only used for the decentralized communities, and not the other communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, I didn't catch the member's full question about will the policy be used in other communities. If the member can please clarify. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Member Malliki, please clarify your question.

**Mr. Malliki** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Is this Nunavut-wide hiring policy going to be only directed to de-centralized communities. 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 clarifying his question.

So this policy is a meaningful step to supporting decentralization. Also, all communities are eligible for this, except for positions in Iqaluit. We cannot hire a community position into Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Members be aware time allotted for the extended question period is now over.

Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Petitions. Item 11, Responses to Petitions. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13, Tabling of Documents.

Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

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

#### **Tabled Document 350 – 6(2): 2023-2024 Qulliq Energy Corporation Annual Report**

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, I'm pleased to table the 2023-2024 Qulliq Energy Corporation Annual Report. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Tabling of Documents. Item 14 – Mr. Hickers.

#### **Tabled Document 351 – 6(2): Correspondence from the Minister of Health: Follow-up from Committee of the Whole's Consideration of the Department of Community and Government Services' 2025-2026 Capital Estimates**

**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 Health in response to questions that were asked during the consideration of the 2025-2026 capital estimates, during the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole during the fall 2024 sitting of the Legislative Assembly. I encourage all members to review the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Tabling of Documents. Item 14, Notices of Motions. Item 15, Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16, Motions. I recognize the Chair for regular Members' Caucus, Mr. Malliki.

### **Item 16: Motions**

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

**Mr. Malliki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by 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 this present sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

Before we go to item 17, we'll take a 15- minute break.

>>*House recessed at 16:05 and resumed at 16:27*

**Speaker:** Welcome back, everyone. Item 17, First Reading of Bills. I recognize Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Gross.

### **Item 17: First Reading of Bills**

#### **Bill 57: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act – First Reading**

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 57, *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*, now be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried and Bill 57 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Education, Minister Gross.

**Bill 66: Early Learning and Child Care Act – First Reading**

**Hon. Pamela Gross:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 66, *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, now be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried and Bill 66 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Finance, Minister Kusugak.

**Bill 67: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – First Reading**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 67, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried, and Bill 67 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Finance, Minister Kusugak.

**Bill 68: An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act – First Reading**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried and Bill 68 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Pauloosie Akeagok.

**Bill 69: An Act Consequential to the Government Reorganization of 2025 –  
First Reading**

**Hon. P.J. Akeegok:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that Bill 69, *An Act Consequential to the Government Reorganization of 2025*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried and Bill 69 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Information and Privacy, Minister Kusugak.

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 70, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026* be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried, and Bill 70 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Finance, Minister Kusugak.

**Bill 71: Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act,  
No. 2, 2024-2025 – First Reading**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the he Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 71, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2024-2025* be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and Bill 71 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Finance, Minister Kusugak.

**Bill 72: Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2025-2026 – First  
Reading**

**Hon. Lorne Kusugak:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 72, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2025-2026*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and Bill 72 has been read for the first time.

I recognize the Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Kusugak.

>> *Technical Difficulties*

**Speaker:** Colleagues, due to technical issues, I am suspending the remainder of today's sitting. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House adjourned at 17:04*





