

NUNAVUT HANSARD
UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025
IQUALUIT, 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-Niaqunngu)

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

Bobby Anavilok
(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross
(Cambridge Bay)

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

George Hickes
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker; Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanasi
(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)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 10, 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, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Ms. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 09:00*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak): (no interpretation)

>>*Prayer*

Speaker's Statement

Speaker (interpretation): Minister's Statements. Hon. Government House Leader, Mr. Joanasie.

Item 2: Minister's Statements

Minister's Statement 563 – 6(2): Member's Absence

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to Nunavummiut and my colleagues. I rise today to inform the House that Hon. Pamela Gross will not be in attendance today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister's Statement 564 – 6(2): Nunavut Agreement Implementation Contract

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say good morning to my colleagues and everyone in Nunavut that's listening this morning.

(interpretation ends) I rise today to announce that the Nunavut Agreement Implementation Contract renewal has finally been approved.

>>*Applause*

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: The contract is between the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Canada, and will cover the period of

April 1, 2024 of March 31, 2034. This is the first renewal of the Nunavut Agreement Implementation Contract since the signing of the Nunavut agreement in 1993. Mr. Speaker, there ratification signals an injection of \$1.5 billion into Nunavut.

>> *Applause*

Hon P.J. Akeagok: Of that, \$588 million of these funds will be allocated to the Government of Nunavut. These funds will enable the full implementation of the Nunavut agreement and realization of the Inuit vision of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, because of this agreement, the annual funding for Government of Nunavut for article 23 related activities will be increasing ten-fold from 4.5 million to 48 million a year. That's 481 million over the next ten years, Mr. Speaker.

Just under 250 million of this funding is to be allocated specifically to Inuit pre-employment activity-related activities, which was determined to be the primary barrier for Inuit employment.

Mr. Speaker, for core activities, the annual implementation of funding to the Government of Nunavut is almost doubling, from 5.5 million to 10.7 million annually. This gives our government the ability to increase capacity and carry out pre-employment training programs and Inuit employment plans.

There will also be increased implementation funding to the Nunavut Arctic College to support programming, aimed at providing Inuit with the necessary skills for government employment.

Mr. Speaker, because of this agreement, Nunavut's Institutes of Public Government, the Nunavut Impact Review Board, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Nunavut Water Board, and the Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal, as well as the Nunavut Planning Commission will see significant funding increases.

The funding for these institutions will almost double, from \$35 million annually to \$62.6 million annually. This will provide an opportunity for these entities to increase capacity, take up a broader role in regulating wildlife harvesting in the communities, and expedite project reviews.

This increase in resources will result in greater certainty for investors, and more opportunities for Nunavut to become a preferred partner in future projects.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Government of Nunavut's Chief Negotiator and team for their tireless efforts in achieving this historic milestone for our territory. Mr. Speaker, Many thanks to Guy d'Argencourt, Letia Obed, and Adrienne Silk for your efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 565 – 6(2): Guaranteed Basic Income Feasibility Study

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to my colleagues and everyone in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, Family Services has completed the feasibility study on the Guaranteed Basic Income Program for Nunavut as part of our ongoing work to identify improvements to the Income Assistance Program.

The Guaranteed Basic Income is a type of cash or income transfer program with reduced administrative and assessment processes. Many guaranteed basic income program models provide recipients with monthly cash transfer payments like the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors and the Canada Child Benefit.

The study analyzed and presented a range of models based on benefit levels, income thresholds, tax policy, incentive structures, and benefit reduction rates. The study also presented program delivery design options that would reform the current Income Assistance Program based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and basic income principles. The importance of the basic income design that encourages community participation and contribution was highlighted in the study.

Mr. Speaker, the feasibility study was presented to stakeholders during the Nunavut Poverty Reduction Roundtable last October. Participants engaged in discussion and provided feedback on several elements that could be incorporated into the Guaranteed Basic Income Program for Nunavut.

Family Services is now reviewing this feedback and will use it to frame and inform community consultations. It is expected that this process will begin later this year.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 566 – 6(2): Mental Health Surveillance System

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the ongoing efforts of Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan partners in working to reduce suicide rates across our territory. Suicide prevention is a collective responsibility, and through partnerships we are working hard to support mental health initiatives and provide help to those in need.

The Department of Health is developing a Mental Health Surveillance System to monitor trends and identify Nunavummiut who need urgent mental health and social support. This system will improve suicide prevention by providing timely data to guide decisions and ensure effective interventions.

The program ensures that individuals experiencing suicidal ideation are identified and supported through a structured follow-up process. When someone is flagged, a case worker collaborates with the local health centre to determine the best approach for follow-up, including visit frequency and necessary support. A case manager oversees the process to ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

The Mental Health Surveillance System brings together data from existing sources, such as coroner and health records, while also developing new sources to strengthen mental health care. As part of this system, we have established one of Canada's first suicide death databases, providing critical insights into suicide in Nunavut. The system also includes a clinical surveillance component to support intake, follow-up, and case management for Nunavummiut experiencing suicidality.

This system was first launched in the Kitikmeot, introduced to the Qikiqtaaluk in November 2023, and began implementation in the Kivalliq in January 2025. Additionally, work is under way to develop a community surveillance program to strengthen outreach, education, and the reporting of mental health needs.

Mr. Speaker, Health remains steadfast in its commitment to improving mental health services and preventing suicide. Having access to timely mental wellness data is fundamental to the strength and resilience of our communities, and we continue working with partners to refine and expand this initiative. Together, we are building a more responsive and effective mental health system, ensuring that all Nunavummiut have access to the support and care they need. *Matna.*

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 567 – 6(2): Nunavut Parks and Special Places Learn-to Program

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight information on the Learn-to Program delivered by Nunavut Parks and Special Places in 2024.

The Parks Learn-to Program is a fundamental component of Nunavut Parks' overall programming. Learn-to events consist of free sessions where the public is invited to discover and learn about a variety of skills and knowledge relevant to Inuit traditions and the use of resources provided by the land. These sessions are offered by local Inuit instructors and elders, who enthusiastically share their knowledge with participants.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, Learn-to sessions were delivered in Kugluktuk, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit. In 2024, the program was expanded, and sessions were also offered in Baker Lake, Sanikiluaq, and Pangnirtung. Evening, weekend, and school-specific sessions were also included, to reach even more participants. In total, about 40 public sessions were offered in these six communities, estimating 375 participants. In addition, 16 Learn-to sessions took place in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet schools, reaching about 460 students.

I would also like to point out that northern media outlets showed increased interest in the Parks' Learn-to Program and published very positive media coverage of these events.

Indeed, the information about our land and the traditional knowledge shared at these sessions is an invaluable resource, and are truly a wonderful learning opportunity for Nunavummiut and visitors to Nunavut at our parks.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 568 – 6(2): Arviat Fur Design and Fashion Show

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again.

Mr. Speaker, the Arviat Community Learning Centre delivered semester one of the Fur Production and Design program to eight students. The program focused on cleaning seal skins, making *kamiik*, and duffle socks.

All students completed their projects and were able to showcase their efforts at the well-attended community fashion show. I would like to thank the community of Arviat for supporting our students and celebrating their hard work.

The feedback from the students was very positive. They were happy to have the opportunity to learn to work with seal skins and to make clothing appropriate for the environment, for themselves, and their family members. I understand students walked away both with pride and with humility. It is meaningful when we learn skills central to Inuit survival and our way of life.

Thank you to the Community and Distance Learning Division for offering this course in Arviat, and thank you to Qikiqtaaluk hunters who provided the skins.

Mr. Speaker, the College remains committed to exploring opportunities to expand its services within our communities.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 569 – 6(2): Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC) Meeting on Capital Funding

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

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, I wish to provide an update on an important meeting held with the federal government regarding capital funding for power generation infrastructure in Nunavut. On January 31, I along with our Qulliq Energy Corporation President and Director of Corporate Services met with 25 federal government officials in Ottawa to discuss the critical need for investment in our aging energy infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, of the 25 isolated diesel power plants that Qulliq Energy Corporation operates across the territory, 10 have exceeded their design life, with several more nearing the end of their expected lifespan. We highlighted our operational challenges, including aging infrastructure, extreme weather, staff turnover, increasing costs, remote locations, and short sealift seasons. These factors, combined with a small customer base and limited funding, create significant challenges in sustaining reliable energy services.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has set ambitious climate goals, that by 2030, 90 per cent of Canada's electricity would be generated from renewable and non-emitting sources and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. While Qulliq Energy Corporation supports renewable energy initiatives and collaborates with organizations on projects like the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link by Nukik Corporation and Nunavut Nukkiksautit Corporation's Iqaluit Hydro Project, among others, achieving these ambitious goals will be challenging. Diesel remains our most reliable energy source, and while we are actively exploring and supporting alternatives, a full transition to renewables is not yet feasible in Nunavut.

We are advocating for additional federal capital investment to ensure the continued provision of safe, reliable, and affordable electricity for Nunavummiut, who already face some of the highest energy costs in the country. Any additional federal support would go towards our long list of infrastructure needs. Our estimated cost to replace 10 aging diesel power plants is \$478 million, and we have also requested a federal takeover of Qulliq Energy Corporation's historical debt to alleviate financial strain.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that this meeting provided our federal partners with a clearer understanding of the unique challenges faced by Qulliq Energy Corporation. We believe that our request for capital funding deserves serious consideration. We will continue pushing for federal financial support in the months to come, while keeping our focus on providing safe, reliable power to Nunavummiut.

Matna.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Minister's Statement 570 – 6(2): Nunavut's Borrowing Limit Increased

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good morning Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Nunavut has secured an increase to Nunavut's borrowing limit, raising it from \$750 million to \$1.05 billion. In October I requested an increase to our territorial borrowing limit from the Government of Canada, highlighting the need for greater financial flexibility.

This increase reflects the Government of Nunavut's responsible approach to financial management. We have carefully managed our borrowing under the previous limit, ensuring funds were used wisely. With this new limit, we and future governments can better plan for investments and address Nunavut's infrastructure needs.

Mr. Speaker, this does not mean we will take on unnecessary debt. The Government of Nunavut will continue to borrow responsibly, focusing on key projects that benefit Nunavummiut. This expanded capacity allows us to invest in housing, transportation, and other essential infrastructure, while keeping our finances sustainable.

I want to thank Finance Canada for their confidence in our approach. The Department of Finance will continue working to ensure Nunavut has the financial tools needed to support growth and long-term stability.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 770 – 6(2): Inuit Child First Initiative

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues. Let's have a good day.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation for the federal government's decision to continue funding the Inuit Child First Initiative.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Simailak: Mr. Speaker, for some time now, myself and many of my colleagues have been raising our concerns respecting the potential impacts on Nunavut's children and youth if this program had not been continued.

Mr. Speaker, many of us voiced our support for the continuation of this program. Our hard-working non-profit organizations in our communities have lobbied hard, with heartfelt pleas and provided so many excellent examples of how the Inuit Child First Initiative has benefited Inuit youth across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, the program has been extended for one year. Many funded programs will come to an end on March 31st and organizations will need to submit new proposals for the next round of funding.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to be complacent. Now that we have a grace period of one year, there are no guarantees that the initiative will be renewed in the next fiscal year.

Our government needs to be prepared. Our communities need to be ready.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the federal government for extending the program for this next year. I sincerely hope that the need will continue to be recognized for the future and that the Inuit Child First Initiative will be there for our children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Member's Statement 771 – 6(2): Hockey Tournament

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I say greetings to Arviummiut.

Yesterday there was a hockey tournament, the polar bear cup. The Member for Naujaat and I were watching the hockey game. It was a great show to watch and my colleague was just getting tight, tight, every time we were watching the hockey game. But I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to state that Arviat hockey team had won yesterday.

I also congratulate the Arviat home team because they're very good hockey players and also coaches Royal St. John and Lisa Anulik (ph), good job. The hockey went very well. The tournament went very well and it was very enjoyable to watch. I congratulate the hockey teams. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement 772 – 6(2): Appreciation to the Search and Rescue Team

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today because I did not complete my statement before. I would like to extend my appreciation to Kunuktugaviq (ph) people for search and rescue team were doing the region's rescue team last month.

I would like to extend my appreciation for these people: Geena Paniluq (ph), C.J. Paniluq (ph), Sandy Kautuq (ph) Joanna Kidlauq, Joanna Kadlauq (ph), Travis Kaudluq (ph). David Ikarealuq (ph). Isa, Isa as well (indiscernible).

Thank you very much for doing search and rescue. I'm very proud of your work and also would like to thank the entities who provide services or who provide HTO, and also

search and rescue team for providing their support. We're very proud of you. Please continue to support this search and rescue.

Thank you very much, my constituency of Uqqummiut search and rescue team, for providing assistance. I would like to thank them and congratulate them for the very great work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Kusugak.

Member's Statement 773 – 6(2): Rankin Inlet Hockey Tournament

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Arviat hockey team who have won, I congratulate them. I did not attend but Naujaat came in second and Rankin Inlet came in third.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people who went to Rankin Inlet to play hockey and I know that we all want to win, but some day. Arviat did play very well, and I'm very proud of them.

Also I would like to thank the people who welcomed the people who visited the people in Rankin Inlet. Every weekend there has been a tournament in Rankin Inlet. Hockey tournament is very busy in Rankin Inlet.

Also I thank the minor hockey association of Rankin Inlet, thank you. This would not be able to happen if there was no committee. Thank you for the entity and also the referees and also the people who clean the ice and who did all the cleaning. Thank you very much for working on these.

I know if you're not going to be busy in Rankin Inlet, there will be a polar bear plate after the Terence Tootoo memorial. Please come watch the hockey tournament and go play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 774 – 6(2): 2025 Awards for Culture Preservation

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to Arviat. Arviat hockey team are very good, so I second my colleague over there because Arviat hockey team won and also Naujaat hockey team.

Mr. Speaker, during our meeting in Toronto there was, I recognize David Kritterdlik from Qikiqtarjuaq who had awarded 2025 Skookum Jim award. I congratulate you, David. You are very good so I will be reading this, why he was recognized.

(interpretation ends) Skookum Jim 2025 award represented for groundbreaking work promoting Inuit values, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. David Kritterdlik was selected due to his transformable leadership in integrating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit values into the mining industry.

As Agnico Eagle's Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and wildlife advisor, David Kritterdlik has played a pivotal role in bridging traditional Inuit knowledge and western science, particularly in his home region of Nunavut.

One of his most significant achievements is the creation of the Kivalliq Elders Advisory Committee, a pioneering initiative that unites over 20 elders from seven communities in the Kivalliq regions.

Under David's leadership, the Kivalliq Inuit Elders Advisory Committee provides invaluable guidance to the Meliadine and Meadowbank mines on topics such as wildlife, water management, climate change, fish habitat, employment, and community well-being.

His consultative approach ensures the committee is community driven and fair, preserving cultural integrity by holding all meetings in Inuktitut with translation support.

(interpretation) Also I would like to state I would like to talk about more of this, but I'm very pleased and I could congratulate David Kritterdlik. When I woke up this morning I urge you to make sure that this be used for long time in the future, because he advises the mining company on Inuit culture. I congratulate you, David, and also your family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Member's Statement 775 – 6(2) Mental Health Surveillance System

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Health for his minister's statement today with regards to the mental health surveillance system. It's greatly appreciated and I could not support this more. I strongly believe that we need a more collaborative approach to addressing the mental health situation across our territory.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many suffering in silence and self-medicating in Nunavut, and Iqaluit is no exception. The level of public intoxication and related violence has clearly intensified over the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few summers, it seems that there is a steady sound every sirens throughout Iqaluit. As in any community there is a minority of the population which is causing majority of the violence and crime. These individuals are driving disturbance calls to the RCMP and are in and out of police custody and regularly being released without proper supports.

Mr. Speaker, this small group of individuals are repeatedly in contact with police because they have complex needs, and in 2023 I asked the Minister of Justice to take a more proactive approach and collaborate with other Government of Nunavut partners such as social workers and mental health workers to help reduce interaction with the law with this small subset of the population.

Mr. Speaker, this is excellent news, and I will be asking questions at the appropriate time with how the Department of Health is utilizing this mental health surveillance system in collaboration with the Department of Justice and the RCMP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Member's Statement 776 – 6(2): Birthday Greetings

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 10, 2024 last year we have a one-year-old, and her parents are very proud of you. We celebrated her birthday yesterday. Our grandchild had a beautiful day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Oral Question 1149 – 6(2): New Community Learning Centre for Sanirajak

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this return to oral question to Mr. Joelle Kaerner, Member for Amittuq, on the new community learning centre for Sanirajak.

Mr. Speaker I rise today to supplement an answer and I confirm that Nunavut Arctic College capital planner has not yet visited Sanirajak, but is set to travel there in early April to assess the community learning centre. We're visiting Igloolik next week, and third assessment to visit Kimmirut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My apologies, there must be some mistake. I do not have a return to oral question prepared for today. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Speaker: I would like to recognize visiting people in the gallery. Welcome to the Assembly.

>>Applause

Speaker: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the visitors in the gallery. Last week on International Women's Day, Dr. Amber (ph) is here and she was awarded recognition and doing follow-up visits. She works with the Department of Health Family Services and Dr. (indiscernible) works closely with pediatricians here. (interpretation ends) She is also the territorial for child abuse physician lead. Dr. Minors (ph) provides medical advice, training, and strategic direction for programming specific to children and youth who have experienced abuse, and for those who are involved in the child welfare system.

Joining Dr. Minors today is Taya Tootoo, the executive director of Arctic Children and Youth Foundation. If you could stand, please.

>>Applause

Under the Umingmak Centre operates Emma While (ph), director of services; Oolia Qaunaq (ph), child and youth advocate.

>>Applause

Unfortunately Jeff Courage (ph) couldn't be here, who is the child and youth advocate as well.

Nancy Pellorin, (ph) child and youth counsellor.

>> *Applause*

And Katy Inupee (ph), program director.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Minors and her team are proof that not all heroes wear capes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Oral Question 1185 – 6(2): Health Diagnostic Equipment

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the sitting I asked questions respecting the staff of different health positions in the community of Pond Inlet. As I indicated at that time, it would be very good to have a full complement of paramedics in the community, as well a doctor who could provide service to the high Arctic communities using Pond Inlet as their base.

Today I would like to ask the minister to provide an overview of what kind of diagnostic equipment could be brought to the smaller communities in order to reduce the number of people who have to travel out for diagnostic testing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

(interpretation ends) I appreciate the question from the member. Department of Health is very excited about ways that we can deliver services for Nunavummiut closer to home and ways that we can reduce our, what I would characterize as an overreliance on medical travel that we've developed over the years.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest innovation we've seen or one of the biggest innovations in Nunavut in recent years has been around virtual health care services, and when we look at the range of services that can be provide virtually, it's very exciting to the department.

We're talking about virtual clinics that include obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, as well as even fracture clinics. So these are some examples. In terms of the equipment piece, we do have the ability to provide virtual care in every one of our health centres right across Nunavut. We are looking for opportunities to expand our capabilities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Minister. (interpretation ends) Those are great to hear.

Mr. Speaker a number of Pond Inlet residents have had to travel away from their home and families to come to Iqaluit to get a computed tomography, known as CT scan, done. The travel and accommodation alone is considerable expense. Can the Minister clarify whether his department has considered investing in a mobile CT scanner that could be brought to the smaller communities outside of Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member again.

Yes, the answer is yes. We're looking for ways that we can expand our services outside of Iqaluit. As the member mentioned, we do have a CT scanner here. While we were upgrading that scanner we had a period of down time and so to cover that period of down time over last summer, we purchased a mobile MRI unit. And now that the new CT scanner is on line at Qikiqtani General Hospital, we're looking for ways to use that mobile unit. Moving it out of Iqaluit and perhaps stationing it in another community is something that we're actively considering.

Again, it's all about delivering care closer home and looking for ways to expand our services for the betterment of Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) That is great news.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that having specialists visit our smaller communities is a much more cost-effective way of delivering specialist health care services to Nunavut residents. I have been given to understand that when a specialist visits, appointments are often booked up right away. I think it would be the same if we had such technical specialists as the CT scan operator travel around with mobile equipment to conduct diagnostic tests in

the home communities, and diagnose sooner for people who have been waiting for a while. Sometimes patients cannot be sent right away for testing, and so I know you just answered this, but will the minister commit to asking his department to look into options for mobile diagnostic testing, and undertake a cost analysis to determine if this could be a feasible approach for health service delivery for communities outside of the regional centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends). Yes, I can commit to that. Some of that work is already under way and I would like to thank all the dedicated staff within the department that are working to advance virtual care.

Mr. Speaker just a few examples of some of the clinics that we've offered that we're currently working on expanding. We've deployed a cardiology clinic in all of Qikiqtaaluk. We have also deployed an allergist clinic. This is also delivered through virtual care. We've also deployed a speech language pathology clinic through virtual care. So this is an area that's very exciting for the department, and we're beginning to continue seeking resources to expand it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1186 – 6(2): Long Term Care

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

Mr. Speaker, soon the new long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet will welcome 22 elders as clients. During the minister's appearance before the Committee of the Whole last week he could not confirm that all of Kivalliq residents who are currently in care in Ottawa would be moved into the new facility. He noted further that they would need to see the level of demand or need amongst Kivalliq residents before moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide further clarification on how his department determines which residents are placed in long-term care facility, and whether their original community of or region of residence factors into that decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the Rankin Inlet Long-Term Care Facility, I can confirm that the home region of reports was a factor, in terms of the point system and the admissions criteria that were

considered in terms of that facility. And so we look forward to seeing those new 22 spaces within that facility filled with elders and they will be relocating from Embassy West.

I'm trying my best to answer the question. I may not have fully understood it, but home region was taken into consideration for admissions into Rankin Inlet long term care. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the premier recently tabled the progress report on the government's Elders and Seniors Strategy which provides an update on the progress towards a Kitikmeot long-term care facility to be built in the community of Cambridge Bay. The report also indicates that a feasibility study will be undertaken to determine potential expansions of the continuing care centres in Gjoa Haven and Igloodik.

Mr. Speaker, with the anticipated increase in the number of long-term care beds in the Kitikmeot region, can the minister clarify whether Kitikmeot elders who need long-term care will be placed in those facilities that are in their home communities or closest to their home communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, I can confirm that. The long-term care team does consider things like distance from the resident's home community, so efforts are made to keep residents of the long-term care system as close to home as possible. We're considering things like the need for family visits. So if it's a Kitikmeot resident and they have secured a space in the Gjoa Haven long-term continuing care centre, for example, we are considering the fact that their family members will want to visit them.

And so depending on availability of space, they will be placed at the closest available facility. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the population in most communities outside of the regional centres is primarily Inuit. However, there are a number of non-Inuit who have lived, worked, and raised their families in Nunavut. As long-term residents of the territory, they too may come to need long-term care as they age.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that all Nunavut residents who require long-term care, whether they are Inuit or not, will be eligible for placement in one of Nunavut's long-term care facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can confirm that. We are a public government, at the end of the day, and Nunavummiut are eligible for services.

And, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for raising this issue and continuing to raise the issues around providing for elders. And it's encouraging to see progress being made on multiple fronts and I look forward to working with my departmental colleagues to make sure we're making as much advancement as we can during the life of this government. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1187 – 6(2): Nunavut Development Corporation

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, who is responsible for Nunavut Development Corporation. As the minister will recall, I asked a number of questions during our recent Fall Sitting about Nunavut Development Corporation activities. As the minister is aware, section 3 of *Nunavut Development Corporation Act* clearly states that the purpose of the corporation is “create employment income for residents of Nunavut, primarily in small communities.”

Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue during the Fall Sitting, I pointed out the Nunavut Development Corporation currently has subsidiaries operating in every Kivalliq community except for Naujaat and Coral Harbour. Can the minister indicate what plans the corporation has to create a new subsidiary or make new investment in the Nunavut communities of Coral Harbour and Naujaat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have spoken to the board of directors chairperson related to getting more out to communities and to see if they can venture out further to what they already have, as our mandate has directed us to diversify our economy. That's one that I'm working closely with the board of directors, in terms of trying to get out.

There's not a specific plan yet, but there are two ways that can get this for the Nunavut Development Corporation to either joint-venture with a community development or directly with Nunavut Development Corporation.

If the member has small companies that want to joint-venture, I would encourage them to contact Nunavut Development Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that. As the minister will recall, his 2023-2024 letter of expectation to the chairperson of Nunavut Development Corporation board of directors was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2023. The corporation's response was later tabled on March 12, 2024.

Mr. Speaker, a member of the Legislative Assembly recently informed that the government has ended the practice of providing annual letter of expectation to the Nunavut Development Corporation and other public agencies. Can the minister indicate how directions to the corporations will be provided in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll verify on the letters themselves, but for any of the boards that are under my portfolio, I work very closely with the boards of directors and their staff in terms of moving forward some of the projects that should be going through. That's one that I'll continue to do, is work very closely with those that we appoint. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. As the minister will recall, he tabled the Nunavut Development Corporation 2022-2023 annual report in the Legislative Assembly November 3, 2023. Can the minister confirm when he will be tabling the corporation 2023-2024 annual report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're planning to table this in spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1188 – 6(2): Contaminated Sites

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are to the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation. Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have been asking questions since I was first became a Member of the Legislative Assembly regarding the contaminated site in the middle of Baker Lake where the community's old power plant was located.

Earlier in our sitting the minister tabled the Qulliq Energy Corporation's 2023-2024 annual report. The annual report contains information regarding the corporation's environmental liabilities for the contaminated sites, including the site in Baker Lake. It indicates that:

“In September 2016 the corporation proceeded with its remediation plan, which included aligned land farm cell and a trench. The remediation of the site was completed during the summer of 2019. However, due to some concerns raised by residents, the corporation is looking to establish a bigger land farm away from the community and has requested another parcel away from the hamlet.”

Can the minister provide an update on the status of this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to monitoring, mitigating, and remediating environmental liabilities on its facilities.

In terms of Baker Lake and the contaminated site there, the latest status update which I was, I believe we are preparing correspondence for the member, it will indicate that work on a land farm and Baker Lake is expected to proceed this upcoming summer. It's being done in collaboration with Petroleum Products Division who also have some remediation needs in the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister, for the response. Regarding those contaminated site in Baker Lake where the power plant site was located, Qulliq Energy Corporation had hired an engineering firm called EPA Engineering, and in their studies in the past it was realized that some of the historical spills from that site had been leaching into our Baker Lake. Is that still the case? Is it still leaching into Baker Lake, the actual lake itself? Is it known? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the technical aspects of that study, which I believe the work was looking at the risks to human health, that's kind of the guide that for Qulliq Energy Corporation in terms of whether we need to remediate a contaminated site. It's around gauging the risks of human health. In terms of that detail and whether or not there's leaching, I don't have that level of detail in front of me here today, but I can commit to including that aspect in the upcoming correspondence to the member. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, fuel spills, leaks and other contamination took place decades ago, when the Baker Lake facility was under federal jurisdiction. As the minister is aware, the land was relinquished in the late 1980s. Information published by the Qulliq Energy Corporation indicates that efforts have been under way for almost two decades to engage with the federal government with a view to identifying responsibility for paying for the cleanup and remediation costs of contaminated sites, including the Baker Lake site. "Polluter pay" is the principle here.

Can the minister confirm how much funding has been received to date from the federal government to pay for cleanup and remediation work at the Baker Lake contaminated site. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I really appreciate the member's question. As the member had mentioned in the preamble to his question, that is Qulliq Energy Corporation's position, is that the polluter must pay. And when it is the federal government who handed off a contaminated site to our corporation, we have been pushing for that to be recognized.

In terms of Baker Lake, we have not yet received any funds from the federal government specifically for Baker Lake, that I'm aware of. And we are dealing with some contamination that goes back decades, back to when it was the federal Ministry of Transportation who provided electrical service to Baker Lake, which was up until 1968.

If we look at how we're going to secure funds for remediation, it's through one of the key groups that we participate on is the Contaminated Sites and Liabilities Working Group, and that's a territorial effort to address contaminated sites with the Government of Canada. And as the member correctly, in my position, pointed out, the polluter must pay and we'll continue working towards that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1189 – 6(2): Nunavut Housing Rent

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Finance on the topic of Nunavut household allowance again. Mr. Speaker, during last Thursday's Committee of the Whole proceedings with Nunavut Housing Corporation, it was stated in a response:

“Regardless of whether it's an owned unit or a leased unit, that is a gross rent or net rent, and whatever utilities are included or not included in the base rent amounts, the amount that the employee pays is a fixed rent.”

Mr. Speaker, this shows to me that the Government of Nunavut wants to provide equal benefits to those employees in staff housing. However, as I've raised in this House a number of times with the minister, that equity of benefits is not practised within the Nunavut Household Allowance.

Will the minister commit today to amending the eligibility amount to include utilities and municipal services, as Nunavut Housing Corporation does with staff housing, yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the line of questioning from my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, today I cannot say a definite yes or no, but as I've said in this House before, it's something that our department is taking a look at and once we've taken a look at it and reviewed these policies, we'll get to a yes or no. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been raising this issue for a while now, a number of months, and I'll continue to raise it.

Mr. Speaker the threshold of the rent is calculated using approximately 70 percent of the average rates at which Nunavut Housing Corporation leases private units for the Government of Nunavut staff housing program. The rates are subject to change and will be reviewed periodically.

Mr. Speaker, when was the last review and when is the next review scheduled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague responded in a previous question last week, I didn't get a chance to find my notes on that. I definitely will find that detail and respond with my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll look forward to that information from the minister.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my earlier preamble, I've been asking this question a number of times, and it's been quite a significant amount of time and there are a number of GN staff that are paying a lot higher rent and not getting the support that other Government of Nunavut staff get. Can the minister give me a clear timeline on when I can expect that yes-or-no answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been working very hard to make it more affordable for home owners and rent payers. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we went from \$400 monthly allowance up to \$1,000, Mr. Speaker, something that wasn't done by previous governments. We took the challenge and took it head on, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure my colleague is well aware of that.

In terms of a definite answer, I definitely hope that before the spring session I will have definite numbers in response to say that very important question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 1190 – 6(2): Search and Rescue

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Community and Government Services. They again concern the issue of search and rescue in the Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on issues that I raised because it's something that needs to be really settled now, because I raised this last week and I'm raising it again.

As the minister will recall, one of the issues that I raise with him concerned the need for search and rescue fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters that can fly low to the ground and

for them to be permanently stationed, it would be better if they are permanently stationed in Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) This would significantly enhance the ability to quickly respond to emergencies. Last week's federal announcement concerning the creation of a new northern operational support hub location is very encouraging. The announcement made specific references to "supporting a greater year-round presence."

Can the minister indicate how Nunavut Emergency Management will be working with federal authorities to enhance search and rescue capacity in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague. It was good to hear last week when the federal government announced that Iqaluit and Yellowknife and Inuvik will be turned into an emergency or search and rescue hub that can be utilized. The Community and Government Services Emergency Management Division works with airplane or helicopter search and we can request for helicopters and aircraft, and we will continue to work with them as this is progressing. We expect that these new hubs will be useful in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. We heard some really good news that will be a big step for Nunavummiut to get help from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) when I raised this issue with the minister last week, he indicated that his department had undertaken a flexibility study and that a report had been completed. Will the minister commit to tabling a copy of this report in the Legislative Assembly for the benefit of all members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to clarify, I was referencing a pre-feasibility study that my department had conducted through a contract, and Mr. Speaker, we did share copies of that preliminary report. There is a more extensive report contained. I think we did share it with members.

We'll continue to keep my colleagues informed on any new developments around this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your response. As the minister will recall, when I spoke about this in the House, I expressed a real concern and I was asked to bring this up by the Uqqummiut search and rescue group. I noted that the minister, when they are having a search and rescue, they are lacking in equipment and a lot of their equipment is too old. This information is coming from the search and rescue organizations in Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq.

(interpretation ends) Last week's federal announcement indicated that new northern operational support hubs "will consist of new and upgraded infrastructure."

Can the minister indicate how his department will be involved in identifying infrastructure and equipment needs. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community search and rescue groups, we always work with them along those lines. And we held a conference for them recently, and we're basing our work on that right now and will be making announcements to all the communities.

I would like to thank all the search and rescue organizations in Nunavut, because they have an important job and they do some real hard work sometimes, and we appreciate their work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1191 – 6(2): Dust Suppression

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services and they concern the issue of dust suppression.

Mr. Speaker, winter is coming to an end and soon it will be spring. Although we all look forward to longer days and warmer weather, the smaller communities are not looking to the annual season of dust. Mr. Speaker, residents of the capital city are privileged to have paved roads. As the minister will recall, the announcement of this paving project back in the year 2008 was described as being an initiative to achieve a healthier community.

Mr. Speaker, we know that excessive amounts of dust can contribute to respiratory problems. Can the minister provide an approximate figure for what it would cost to fund road-paving programs in communities outside of Iqaluit. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of any estimates for rates for road-paving projects outside of Iqaluit. I'll have to look into that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be good to know how much it would cost; then we would have more information.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, my colleague from Aivilik recently asked him questions about his department's dust suppression initiatives. Can the minister provide an update on what new initiatives the government has been working on to improve dust control in smaller communities like Igloolik. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know being still I guess spring is around the corner, I wasn't really expecting a dust questions today, if you will, but I do know that my department does work with each municipality to support them in ensuring that they have equipment and the substance they used to try to suppress dust in their roads. And there's training involved. We try to enhance that support to municipalities as and when. When they request it we try to support them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It's just so your strategic plans won't get dusty, so you need to remember.

>>*Laughter*

Ms. Quassa: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to note that the Department of Environment has recently published an updated set of environmental guidelines regarding the use of dust suppressants. The publication contains excellent information regarding use of different substance to combat dust, and I encourage all my colleagues to review the document with care. Can the minister indicate how he works with the Minister of Environment to ensure that municipalities are aware of these guidelines. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those two ministers work very well together, and just to build off of that, that my officials do work on these matters as well, given that these suppressants, to make sure that they don't adversely affect the environment or the community, and the people that are that are our residents, we went to make sure they are safe for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1192 – 6(2): Mental Health Surveillance System

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned during my member statement, my questions today are for the Minister of Health.

Again I would like to thank the minister for making his announcement on the mental health surveillance system. It is clearly needed across our territory in developing mental health surveillance system to monitor trends and identify Nunavummiut who need urgent mental health and social support.

The minister had indicated that the program was launched in Kitikmeot first, and then in Qikiqtaaluk in November 2023. I would like to ask, can the minister highlight some of the impact that this program has had since it was launched. 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. We're quite excited by this system, and in terms of expanding the roll-out to more communities, it's literally happening as we speak in terms of adding more communities.

The mental health surveillance system, I think the one of the biggest benefits to it to date has been ensuring a greater attention to detail, I guess we could call it, in terms of the case management. It has strengthened our case management in terms of providing reminders and providing time frames within which health professionals are given notifications regarding specific clients and in terms of having them followed up with.

We've seen improvement in case management handovers, supporting continuity of care. And we've also benefitted through the system because it provides accountability and better documentation for follow-up work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for that response. I'm sure this mental health surveillance system will have exceptional benefits across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, as I also indicated during my member statement, and in fact on many occasions, it's a fact that the minority of the population does commit a majority of the violence. In addition, Mr. Speaker, there's so many people suffering in silence and self-medicating with alcohol, especially here in Iqaluit.

As the RCMP are likely the front-line workers interacting with these individuals the most regularly, I thought it was appropriate to ask the Minister of Justice and the RCMP collaborate more effectively with other GN agencies such as mental health or social workers.

I would like to ask, since 2023, since I made that request to have more collaboration with interdepartmentals to address these individuals, what has the Department of Health's mental health workers done to assist these individuals who are falling through the cracks? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the interagency aspect of the mental health and addiction work, it is an important one. We don't want to have departments or offices within Iqaluit for example to be working in silos, and so looking at our Iqaluit mental health and addictions team, they do maintain strong linkages the staff within our departments.

In terms of the mental health surveillance system, Mr. Speaker, we do include data from Royal Canadian Mounted Police in terms of what we're working with. Looking at here in Iqaluit the outreach team at mental health and addictions outreach team, they do work with other departments, in terms of providing guidance around mental health issues and clients and we do have a footprint that extends beyond just our facilities. We're looking at outreach services through an after-school program that exists through the work the men's shelter. There's also work at the drop in centre with youth. There's a weekly program at the Qimavik shelter operated through YWCA, as well as monthly mental health awareness programs. It's an important component of our work, to work with our partners at Department of Justice on behalf of Nunavummiut. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker again I appreciate the minister's response. I'm glad there's a footprint beyond mental health facilities.

Mr. Speaker, looking at the RCMP's annual figures, for the minister's information, in 2024 there was over 2,730 individuals, detainees held at the RCMP station; and in 2023, there was over 2,800 individuals held as detainees.

Mr. Speaker it's often referred to as the drunk tank for the reason, because the majority if not all of the individuals are intoxicated, and I'm sure there are quite a few individuals that repeatedly visit these detention cells.

I'm glad that the minister had indicated he does share data with the RCMP, and I would like to ask specifically if the department's mental health team shares information with regards to the RCMP detention cells here in Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to assume a lot of these individuals are suffering from alcoholism and could greatly benefit with the attention and support that can be provided by the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It's through our interagency information sharing protocol that we're able to share information between agencies regarding individuals. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are a signatory, as is the Department of Justice, to that protocol. It's one that is important to our work, and looking at the services we're providing here in Iqaluit, in terms of the clinical side, we have what amounts to the greatest availability of clinical mental health services anywhere in the territory.

So we have a number of facilities that we are providing mental health services from. We're providing assessment, crisis intervention, stabilization services, outreach support, as well as psychotherapeutic services. And just encourage Iqaluit residents and any resident of any community, if you are feeling that you need help, whether it's with an addiction or another personal issue, there's always someone willing to listen.

I encourage Iqaluit residents to reach out to one of our staff across the city. If you are feeling like you need to access addiction counselling or just need someone to talk to, it's important to have an open door and an open hand to those who need help. I thank the member for raising this important issue. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1193 – 6(2): Arctic Security and Sovereignty

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my question today are for the premier, and they concern the subject of Arctic security and sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, there are presently four Canadian NORAD regional forward operating locations in Canada; these are in Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, Inuvik and Yellowknife.

On Thursday of last week the federal government announced that new northern operations support hubs will be established in Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Inuvik. The stated purpose of this initiative is to “enable Canadian Armed Forces to better assert Canadian sovereignty and support greater year-round presence.”

Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed that Rankin Inlet’s forward operating location site was not included in this federal announcement. Can the premier indicate what reasons he was provided by the federal minister for this omission. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for that question. First, I just want to say it was very welcoming news to see investments coming to the Arctic, in particular to Nunavut as well, when we talk about Arctic security, but in particular infrastructure. I just want to thank the Government of Canada for making that announcement.

As I have mentioned here in the House as well, it was indicated that this is just the beginning of the investments that they do hope to see, and while we weren’t involved in the actual selections of the locations for the operation hubs that are indicated, I am pleased any investment that does come for the territory. I can get back to the member if and when I have an opportunity to meet with the minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the premier is aware, Rankin Inlet’s new airport terminal building project is nearing completion. This modern terminal building will complement aviation-related activities at the forward operating location facility. Does the premier share my position that the federal government should include Rankin Inlet as a part of its new Northern Operational Support Hub initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his question. I have fielded many questions here in terms of wanting to see investments, in

particular to dual-use infrastructure in all our communities, ranging from search and rescue all the way to nation-building infrastructure that assert the sovereignty of the Arctic. It has been my pleasure to be able to voice those supports, whether it's the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link, which I know I've continued to support and pushed to see those types of investments through.

With that in mind I can't commit to specific locations, to the member's question, but I will continue to see investments come to the territory, come to the north, come specifically to Nunavut, as we are in discussions about what dual use could look like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week's federal announcement indicated that "Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces and other federal partners are actively working to identify other hub locations and will continue to work with territorial governments."

We know that the federal election is likely to be held within the next few months, prior to the end of our current Legislative Assembly. Will the premier commit to formally raising the issue of adding Rankin Inlet to the Northern Operational Support Hub network with whomever is elected to serve as Canada's next prime minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank again my colleague for that question. Gives me a moment to recognize and congratulate the prime minister-designate at the moment, Mr. Mark Carney, who was selected by his peers. We very much look forward to continuing on building the strong relationship we have with Ottawa, and as a consensus we will work with anyone. It's important to continue to see investments, especially in the north, where we have such a divide between the north and south.

At this moment I could only commit to continuing to work very closely with the federal government on advocating for all infrastructure coming to the territory, and that is something that I will continue to advocate for, as in particular with the uncertainty that we are seeing, not knowing exactly when the potential election will be, whether it's just within weeks or months as indicated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1194 – 6(2): Clean Energy Infrastructure

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join my colleague the premier in congratulating the prime minister-designate, Mr. Mark Carney, and would add gratitude for Prime Minister Trudeau's support of the north.

My questions today are for Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, and they concern the issue of clean energy for Nunavut.

On Monday last week the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik jointly announced a roadmap to securing Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security. This announcement identified four nation-building infrastructure priorities, including the Iqaluit hydro electric project, which is being developed by the Nunavut Nukkiqsautiit Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has previously indicated in this House that although the Qulliq Energy Corporation is not leading this project, it has been engaged with the proponent. I would like to provide the minister with an opportunity today to tell us more about the nature of this engagement, and I would ask him to very clearly explain what specific resources the Qulliq Energy Corporation is bringing to the table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In terms of the Iqaluit hydro project, the proponents of that project being Nunavut Nukkiqsautiit Corporation, the relationship we have with them is an important one. Qulliq Energy Corporation, although we're not the proponent, we're keenly interested in monitoring the development of this project. We do meet regularly with Nunavut Nukkiqsautiit Corporation. We are looking for avenues to support the project.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time we can't take our eye off the lightbulb, and we need to make sure the lightbulb stays lit, and so looking at our capital plan for this year, we are fully stretched out trying to keep our diesel power plants operating right across Nunavut.

We know Nunavummiut deserve reliable power. We're investing \$25 million through this year's capital project into new generation sets in multiple communities. We just put in an application for Iqaluit, too. That's in front of the Utility Rates Review Council right now.

So why am I talking about diesel? Because reliable diesel infrastructure is a prerequisite to get to more renewable power in Nunavut. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure a lot of us could talk about diesel all day, and I was really happy to hear Mr. Carney's commitment to knock off the carbon tax, so that's great.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the concerns that many of my colleagues have been raising about the need for their communities to have safe, reliable, and modern generation infrastructure. I want to take this opportunity to assure them that I'm in no way advocating that resources for the Iqaluit hydroelectric project should displace investments in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of nine-figure totals being tossed about in the news media for the Iqaluit hydroelectric project, and I wonder, can the minister clearly indicate what estimates the Qulliq Energy Corporation has come up with in respect to its development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Ultimately I think that's a question that's best answered by the proponents, Nunavut Nukkiksautiit Corporation. The most recent nine-figure figures that I could quote are regarding the work that was done back in 2017. There were cost estimates for the Iqaluit hydro project; depending on which site was chosen it was going to be \$232 million for Jaynes Inlet and \$175 for Armshow South.

Mr. Speaker, the proponent Nunavut Nukkiksautiit Corporation is working on a project in a different location, and ultimately, as it is their project, they're the ones who can give the most recent, the most accurate data around estimates of cost. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Information public leaders by the project proponents indicates that the Nunavut Nukkiksautiit Corporation does not control electricity rates in Nunavut. Our modelling indicates that water power is cheaper than diesel power so there is a potential for this project could lower electricity bills for the territory. Any decisions about lowering electricity rates for ^ customers ^ Commerce are made by Qulliq Energy Corporation, the Utility Rates Review Council, and the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I fully realize that we are still a number of years away from this project's completion, but I imagine that the minister and their Qulliq Energy Corporation are also doing their own modelling.

Can the minister indicate what estimates the Qulliq Energy Corporation has come up with in respect to the impact on electricity rates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the impact to electricity rates, as the member correctly pointed out, there is a number of different factors as well as decision-making bodies that would directly affect or indirectly affect the resulting cost of electricity rates.

We are under a territory-wide rate structure now, which is a consideration. When we look at the Iqaluit hydro project as well as the Kivalliq hydro-fibre project, the work that needs to be completed between Qulliq Energy Corporation and the proponents is around a power-purchase agreement. Which is different than what we are working on in communities like Sanikiluaq and Nauyasat; those are energy purchase agreements.

So when you're talking intermittent power, whether it's from solar or wind, the back end, the negotiations and the financial agreements between the proponents and Qulliq Energy Corporation are fundamentally different than when you're talking about firm power, which is what Iqaluit hydro project would like to provide to the community.

In effect, if it's able to supply the entire community of Iqaluit, we would be able to turn the diesel plant off, which is something we don't do any day of the week currently. And the firm power for the community would be provided through that hydro project.

So all that is a long winded way Mr. Speaker to say that it's much too early to tell, but that work towards a power-purchase agreement needs to happen, and it's something we're committed to advancing. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1195 – 6(2): Carbon Management in the Kitikmeot

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Good morning to Kugluktukmuit.

(interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Environment. I want to first thank the minister for his statement last week concerning the Dolphin Union caribou herd. We needed to hear this information.

In his statement the minister indicated that the Department of Environment “completed an aerial abundance survey from October 2023 to November 2023 and a final report was provided to co-management partners in December 2024.”

As the minister will recall, I spoke on Tuesday about the importance of trusting hunters and their knowledge. Can the minister describe how his department worked with local hunters in this recent population survey. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From my understanding, my department works with the local hunters and trappers association, as well as our partners in the wildlife management boards. For example, if they're doing an aerial survey, they have local people involved doing the counts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that. In his statement last week the minister indicated that "the Dolphin Union caribou are listed as species at risk and are currently in the process of being uplifted to endangered under the federal *Species At Risk Act*. As a result, the information collected from this survey supports a federal decision-making process."

Can the minister clarify how his uplifting will impact Inuit rights to harvest caribou from the herd, and can he indicate if the Government of Nunavut supports a designation of the herd as being endangered. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my department, again, we work very closely with Nunavut Wildlife Management Board as we make these wildlife decisions. And also, respecting the Nunavut agreement, I can't say one way or the other. I need to get my department's recommendation on where they think this specific caribou herd, whether or not to list it as the federal species at risk as potentially going to be listing them accordingly.

But we wanted to work with my officials, but also again with the advice from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, they are our co-management partners in this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I just want to say that the hunters, they know all the herds at all times of the year. So does the government want to get the closest number, the furthest from the estimates because

estimates are way off sometimes, and the hunters are able to really get the closest number, if they use very well.

As the minister will recall, I raised concerns earlier last week about transboundary caribou-management issues involving our neighbours in the Northwest Territories. These concerns relate to all the different herds of our region, Bluenose, Bathurst, Dolphin, and Union. In my statement I indicated that I have received concerns that meetings sometimes occur where there are no representatives present from the Government of Nunavut. Can the minister indicate how his department will address this concern. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take that concern to my officials, and I'm not sure of the specific example that he provided, but I do know that our department does try to engage with our local partners as well as our co-management, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board on all tables. If there's been some representation from the Government of Nunavut, I'll ensure that we try to make sure that we're on top of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1196 – 6(2): Arctic Security and Sovereignty

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the premier, and they concern the recent federal and territorial announcement about Arctic security and sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, when the federal Leader of the Opposition came to Iqaluit last month to announce his platform for Arctic security, our premier publicly stated “decisions about the north cannot occur without significant input from northerners.”

Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals made announcements about the new operating support hubs that were needed in the three territories, including Nunavut, the premier's response was that the new operating support hubs were needed.

Mr. Speaker, two very similar announcements from two different federal parties, and two very different results from the premier. The premier should not be playing party politics with possible infrastructure investments within Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker nobody here is going to disagree with the need for our voices to be heard, but there's a world of difference between being consulted and giving permission.

My first question for the premier is this: When did the premier first learn about the recent federal decision to establish new northern operating support hubs in Iqaluit, Inuvik, and Yellowknife, and did the Liberal government specifically ask for our government's position to make this decision and establish these facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his question. I just want to be very clear that we did not tell the official opposition Mr. Pierre Poilievre whether we support or not his plan. It was very clear in the statement that I was clear that any plan investments coming to the north should involve northerners, as well as Inuit organizations in their decisions. I just want to be very clear on that front.

Mr. Speaker, just as well to be very clear, Minister Blair did consult and did ask for our support as right from the beginning when he was drafting his strategy in terms of the strong and free document, which at that moment the northern operational hubs were identified.

At the moment there were no site selections that were identified, but before that time we did talk about the importance of dual use infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear the premier's answer to my question whether the federal government asked for permission to establish these hubs here in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, is it the premier's position that the federal government should be required to ask permission of the Government of Nunavut and/or Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated regarding military investments such as the one that was announced last week? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his question. We were given a heads-up from the minister's office that they were coming up to make the announcement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the announcement identified four specific megaprojects requiring significant federal investment to complete, including the

Grays Bay Road and Port Project and Kivalliq hydro fibre. Mr. Speaker, there was one particular sentence that caught my eye:

“By using available legislative tools with stakeholder support, the federal government can accelerate the start of construction on these critical projects.”

Can the premier clearly explain what he meant by using “available legislative tools”, and can he clarify if this means accelerating the regulatory review process for these infrastructure projects similar to what Canada’s energy and mines minister announced last week regarding critical minerals development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his questions. First, I can’t stress enough the importance of consultation, especially with Indigenous organizations. It’s so important to ensure that you have that consent directly from Indigenous organizations, and in our case with Inuit as well.

Mr. Speaker, we highlighted we are at a very critical moment in our history in our country. Our economic challenges that we’ve been given with the tariffs really have pivoted our minds to the opportunity of a generation, in terms of having to open up markets, and we’ve been very clear that the north offers us opportunities for us to play a big role in terms of what that could look like. We had indicated as well here many times here the importance of our incredible critical resources, of our critical minerals wealth that we do have in the territory.

So in that announcement it was noted that there are tools, many tools that are at the disposal of the federal government and that we encourage them to explore all those opportunities to see if there’s anything, whether it’s investments in grants or it’s looking at regulatory processes, that could be looked at to make sure these nation-building projects do happen.

At this moment there’s many to consider, but that’s the direction we provided to our colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members be aware time allotted for question period is now over. Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Replies to Budget Address. Item 11, Petitions. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13, Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents**Tabled Document 380 – 6(2): Report on the Community Transportation Initiative Program**

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the *2021-2022 Report on Community Transportation Initiative Program*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Tabled Document 381 – 6(2): Chief Public Health Officer's Health Status Biennial Report

Hon. John Main: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Chief Public Health Officer's Health Status Biennial Report. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 382 – 6(2): 2022-2023 Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society: Policing**Tabled Document 383 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut's Response to the Decentralization Review**

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table two reports, the *2022-2023 Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society: Policing*, and the *Government of Nunavut's Response to the Decentralization Review*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Justice Mr. David Akeegok.

Tabled Document 384 – 6(2): 2023 Law Foundation Annual Report

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am please to do table the 2023 Nunavut law foundations Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 14, Notices of Motions. Mr. Malliki.

Item 14: Notices of Motion

Motion 45 – 6(2): Extended Adjournment – Notice

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, I will move the following motion:

I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that pursuant to provision of rule 3 that when the House concludes its sitting, it shall be adjourned until May 22, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 15, Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Malliki.

Item 16: Motions

Motion 45 – 6(2): Extended Adjournment

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Mr. Malliki is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues.

I MOVE, seconded by Hon. Member for South Baffin, that pursuant to provision of rule 3, that when the House concluded its present sitting, it shall be adjourned to May 22. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 17, First Reading of Bills. Item 18, Second Reading of Bills. Item 19, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other matters. Bills 43, 50, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, with Mr. Savikataaq in the chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to Motion 44 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Before we go to the Committee of the Whole, we'll take a 15-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House adjourned at 10:59 and Committee commenced at 11:24

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

Chairman (Mr. Joe Savikataaq): Good morning. I would like to call our Committee of the Whole to order. In the Committee of the Whole we have Bill 43, 50, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, and 72. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue the review of Bill 70, *Appropriation Operation and Maintenance Act 2025-2026*, and supporting documents, starting with the Community Services and the remaining departments and if time permits, supplementary appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Are we in agreement to continue with Department of Community Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister, do you have officials that you wish to have appear before the committee? Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Does the committee agree we have the minister's officials before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Minister Akeeagok, please identify your officials. We are done with opening comments, so we will go straight into general comments from the members. Minister Akeeagok.

**Bill 70 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026 –
Consideration in Committee**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. On my right is Kristie Cronin, Deputy Minister, and on my left is Adam Fisher, Associate Deputy Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Do we have comments before we go into the detailed questions? I see none, so we're doing community service, corporate management.

Members please go to K4, I'll open up the floor to questions on the budgets on K4, corporate management. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On October 10, 2024 the Government of Nunavut announced the creation of the new Department of Community Services and the new Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. The question is, Mr. Chairman, as of today, what is the status of the reorganization process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to get this budget approved, which is for Community Services this is the next step is to formally approve it, approve the budget so the department can function as for community services. This will become effective April 1, 2025, with the approval from this House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next question is how much has the government spent to date on the reorganization process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there's not a specific amount, but what my colleague mentioned the other day was that internally as a government as a whole we spent over \$1 million related to this reorganization. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you Mr. Chairman. A number of you're departments' policies including grants and contributions policy and the country food distribution policy have expired or sunsetted. The question is, Mr. Chairman, as of today, what is the status of the new department's work to revise or renew these policies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the member is correct that there are a number of policies that have sunsetted. We continue to utilize them, and our plan as part of this reorganization is to renew all of our policies and to have those sunset dates moved. I don't have a specific thing, I'm talking about in general of all the policies that we currently have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. I'll leave the rest for my colleagues. The *Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Implementation Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2017. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's 2023-2026 business plan indicated that one of its priorities was to begin the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti comprehensive review, as mandated by sections 12.7 of the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti chief regulations and in support of Katujjiluta actions.

Your new department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that following the outcome of the judicial review, engagement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated will continue to establish priorities and objectives for amending the Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti regulations. The question is, Mr. Chairman, this will be my last question. What is the nature of the dispute? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the major dispute that was brought forward for judicial review was related to the major works bid cap, and that discussions that we had with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated is that we need to have that comprehensive five-year review that is required in that regulation, that we need to start that. Both Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and us have agreed that we'll proceed with the comprehensive review, and have that major works bid cap as part of, and incorporated into the review. So we have reached an agreement to start that review process. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Following the list of names, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): I don't have any questions.

Chairman: I have no more names on my list. Grant summary, Community Services Corporate Management total operations and maintenance \$8,162,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to K6. Community Service, Service Nunavut. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Welcome, Minister, and your officials.

(interpretation ends) The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's 2024-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2023-2024 fiscal year

was to “establish a new divisional headquarters in Rankin as per the approved reorganizational plan.”

The new department draft 2024-2025-2026 business plan indicates that “our efforts are under way to finalize to implement the approved organizational structure for Motor Vehicles Division.” How many of division’s 17.0 positions are currently vacant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the reorganization of the motor vehicles was approved. 11 out of the 17 are going to be in Rankin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

Speaker: *Mat’na.* For clarity, 11 are vacant? Minister Akeeagok?

Hon. David Akeeagok: Yes, Mr. Chair, 11 of them are vacant at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Did the government look at other communities to place these jobs? If not, why not?

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for the headquarters function, we need a unit in a community, and we had selected Rankin Inlet for that unit, to have the director and key staff in there. That’s the plan that we’re continuing.

We do have regional operations that will service the communities, and that’s how the motor vehicles is functioned. As part of this reorganization, one of the good things that I will commend is that our government liaison officers that are in every community will be part of this department, because a lot of the work functions on the serving Nunavummiut is at that level, is at the government liaison officers, where they go for their motor vehicles applications and that. So every community will have some form of function under the motor vehicles through this new departmental reorganization. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na,* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Reading between the lines, is the minister saying smaller communities are not capable of taking care of this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely not. What I'm referencing is for the headquarters positions, they would be based in Rankin Inlet.

Our government has done wonderful creative ways of doing things. If some of those positions would be or are eligible for Nunavut-wide as part of our recruitment, those can happen.

What I'm saying is that Motor Vehicles Division, the way it's functioned is that we put a unit headquarters function into one community, and those positions would be in that community. But for the community-specific ones, we have the functions, the roles and the functions that are needed in our very communities, go and apply for motor vehicle registrations, motor vehicle licences, and that function will fall under this department through our government liaison officers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your new department draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that the review of the motor vehicle information system has been completed, and the contract has been successfully extended to November 2026, ensuring continuity of service.

The business plan also indicates that recommendations for the future management of motor vehicles information are currently in development and are on track to be completed by April 1, 2025. What specific recommendations are being actively considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there's a number of things that are being looked at. The one thing that is being looked at is, can we make this into a digital format and go away with paper. That's one of the things that we are looking very closely into under this review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Just before I go back, just for clarity, just the application process, or even the licence? Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the licence needs to be hardware and the return of our polar bears is very exciting, so our vehicles will be able to see that. For applications on that and for motor vehicles to function, we're looking into that we're looking at getting fully digital. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation 2024-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was to "conduct a review of the school busses regulation and driver's licence regulation."

Your new department draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates "a review of school bus regulations and driver's licence regulations is actively under way and the remaining on track for a completion as planned."

What specific change are being considered and what is the timeline for publishing the new regulation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's a federal-provincial-territorial meetings at that level right now, in terms of trying to change ways has happened. If you recall, there's some major accidents that have happened in our southern provinces, and one of the key initiatives that were being discussed was putting seatbelts into the school busses. And if that does happen then we'll have to adjust our regulations to meet that code.

It's still a very lively discussion between our, federal, provincial, and territorial meetings in terms of whether that regulation is warranted. And so those are something that will continue as a territorial government, have continued dialogue with our federal-provincial-territorial colleagues. We want to make sure that is standardized throughout Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many of the division positions will be located in Rankin? How many will be located in Iqaluit? How many will be located in Cambridge Bay? How many will be located in Gjoa Haven? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Mr. Chairman, please bear with me while we're getting that information. I don't have it readily available, but through you, I could probably send a written response in terms of where those positions are. I do know that in Gjoa Haven there are, we do have the three positions that are there. I'll get you the list. There will be six in Rankin Inlet, eight in Iqaluit, and three in Gjoa Haven. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Okay, I have no more names on my list under Service Nunavut. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question in regards to the comment that you mentioned about garage. What are we talking about here? Are we talking about a driver's licences? My question is that the staff or positions. I know that one of the members asked about that in total positions and total positions that are permanent. What kind of plans do you have and do you have additional positions to put in? In what I saw the positions available, they're not catching up to the positions that we're supposed to get. But my question is will you be dealing with, if you're going to come up with a new positions, are you going to be working on the policies. That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood her question, the positions when we start with the job descriptions will come with the positions and that's what we're working on. For example, in regards to motor vehicles information system, once it changed it would change the job description as well. So we are continually reviewing the job descriptions and also we look for ways to improve them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. You understood my question. But in regards to your staff, when you give them more responsibilities to do, and according to that description, and if we increase the responsibilities, they cannot keep up to the responsibilities at times. I urge your department, I'm asking you as the minister, will you be monitoring to make sure that they are not overworked. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we're trying to update them to make sure that these positions are not overloaded with their responsibilities and have received letters of correspondence from the mayor, from one of the communities that this individual was overworked, and there was one officer working there. I'm just using that as an example.

When the position has too much work to do, or even if they're overloaded we are looking at ways how we can improve to make sure these positions are not overloaded with what they have to do or their responsibilities.

I believe that we need to come up with new positions in the communities to make sure that the communities receive what they require. And I know that this will be very beneficial once we pass or approve this line item. We will always consider to make sure that each position are not overloaded with the responsibilities, whether job description and that's what we have set out to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. According to the list of names I have, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, your department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates include \$4.413 million in funding for the safety services division. How many of the division's 23.0 positions are currently vacant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, 12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And is the department currently keeping up with the demand for inspections services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as of today, yes, and we're using combinations like using contractors, if we need. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, amendments to the *Technical Standards and Safety Act* were recently approved by the Legislative Assembly during its fall 2024 sitting. How many safety inspections under the legislation have been undertaken to date during the current 2024-2025 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, through you, may I ask to change witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Does the committee agree to change witness?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Akeegok, please change witnesses and then introduce your new witness. Mr. Akeegok, introduce your witness.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Kyle Seeley, who's the Deputy Minister for Community and Government Services. If I may ask that that question be directed to him to respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Seeley, do you need the question rephrased or do you remember it? Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I captured the question; if I didn't, I'm sure the member will let me know through you.

The number of inspections that would have been completed over the past year is dependent on the number of permit applications that have been received. We do report on these annually and will continue to do so. And they are of course driven by the amount of development within the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Deputy Minister. Hopefully the demand will increase as we can see some more infrastructure in Nunavut.

Moving along to government liaison officers, Minister, as of today, which communities do not have a government liaison officer in place? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are four vacancies under the government liaison officer positions as of today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok, can you please inform the committee which four communities they are vacant at. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, not immediately but I will for sure provide this information. I would like to clarify, although there are four vacancies all

communities are filled, and some of them are under casual. I just wanted to verify that, that there are some vacancies but I want to assure that we use our casual staff to try and make sure that they are filled. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for verification, the casuals that do fill in this important role, are trained ahead of time so that they can provide the services required on the spot? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as soon as they get hired the training does start. And the way government liaison officers function is that we do have regional staff that serve their communities and also work as regionals, so we try and ensure that there's always coverage in every community for this very important role. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* I have no more names under Service Nunavut. Community Service, Branch Summary, Service Nunavut total operation and maintenance, \$12,976,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to K7, Community Services, Supporting Communities Branch. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates indicate that the budgets for the municipal funding program and the water and sewage subsidy program are not changing from the 2024-2025 fiscal year. How did your department determine that no increases or decreases are required? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, our first step is to get this reorganization done and then start focussing on the very critical programs that are being run. For the two that you mention, from what I know they are under renewal. Therefore, once we determine that, if we need to come back to the House then we'll come back to the House. That's what our business plan is indicating, that they are under review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. (interpretation ends) would your department have an idea how long that will take? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As per our business plan, we are planning to review this within this fiscal year, so I hope it's going to be within this fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Just for clarity, the current fiscal year? Or the fiscal year starting April 1.? Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Thank you for that. The business plan starts on April 1. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it would be 2024-2025? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Yes, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is to "begin a comprehensive review of municipal water and sewage subsidy program to evaluate its effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement."

Would your department have an idea what is the most significant program that may be actively considered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's very important to do with water and sewage subsidy, and we'll see where we can make improvements. So it's something that's very important to all the communities. If they would like to make changes we're more than willing to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister. (interpretation ends) I would like to touch upon the *Emergency Measures Act*. Nunavut's

Emergency Measures Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2007. Section 5 to 9 of the legislation provides for the preparation of “emergency management programs” on the part of government institutions and municipal councils.

However, these sections of the legislation have not yet been brought into force. What is the government’s current timetable for bringing these sections of the *Emergency Measures Act* into force? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as part of this in order for us to enact the legislation, every department needs to have an emergency plan. Currently we are waiting on at least three of them and once we receive all of them then we’ll deem that we’ll be able to implement that section of the plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister. (interpretation ends) Your department’s draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that the Emergency Management Division has made several service and program improvements including the decentralization and enhancement of the search and rescue program to provide better services to all Nunavut municipalities. What specific enhancements have been made to the program? (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, through you, could I ask Deputy Minister Seeley to respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat’na.* Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Minister. Over the last year to 18 months the Emergency Management Division has made a number of programming improvements, starting with staffing key positions, starting with the manager of ground search and rescue now located in Cambridge Bay.

In addition to filling those positions, the division has also engaged local search and rescue organizations in a variety of forums, both in person and on line, to ensure that they are provided with the supports that they need to advance search and rescue programs in the communities.

That started off with a forum that has been discussed here over the last two weeks, bringing all these leaders here to Iqaluit, in addition to the review of the search and rescue policy that is managed through the Emergency Management Division. That work has been supported by some additional engagement at the municipal level by doing additional work to prepare communities to develop their community emergency response plans. The department has provided additional funding to each municipality or made it available to each municipality to provide additional operational supports for search and rescue and emergency management in the communities.

These are a couple of measures that the department has taken over the last year, definitely enhancements over where we were a year ago. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* At this time I will recognize the clock and we will break until 1:30.

>>*Committee adjourned from 12:03 to 13:29*

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Good afternoon. I would like to call our Committee of the Whole meeting back to order here. Right now we're dealing with Community Services, supporting community branch and the next person on my list is Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your department's draft 2025-2026 main estimate indicates that the budget for grant in lieu of tax program increased by 5.8 percent from \$9,053,000 to \$9,583,000. 83 million, how was the amount of this increase determined? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the city had an increase in their rates and therefore it's reflective of those rates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. The Minister of Community and Government Services' letter to the standing committee dated January 10, 2023 indicated that the department "conduct a survey of human resource needs of non-tax-based municipal corporation in March 2022."

The department determined that additional research will be required to align funding for four municipal positions co-operated with the base funding component of municipal funding program. What is the timeline for this work? Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) According to my briefing, this work is being reflected and I believe our government had provided funding for additional 3.6 million in 2024-2025 towards that and we're helping out the municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Minister. The 2024-2026 business plan of the Department of Community and Government Services indicate one of the priorities for 2024-2025 fiscal year was to commence review of the *Hamlets Act* and *Cities, Towns and Villages Act* to highlight key points to consider during the consultation process. Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it has committed to support a Nunavut Association of Municipalities in conducting preliminary review of the *Hamlets Act* and the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*. Funding has been provided to assist NAM in identifying municipal priorities related to legislation as an initial step in the legislative review process. What specific change to the two acts are being actively considered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that review is being done by our good partners over at the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. That's going help shape what the main priorities are. I think one of the priorities that we've heard from the municipalities is the length of term of the election from a four-year to a two-year. That has been mentioned at the municipal level. So that's one example that I wanted to use. But there's definitely others through this review that the Nunavut Association of Municipalities will do to help form a lot of these good conversations that will land into this House, if there are any legislative changes to be made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Minister. Does that mean municipalities are looking into a two-year term instead of four-year term? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's one of the items that the municipalities have raised through this forum, through the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. That's one thing that's part of what is being looked into. Decisions will not be made unless if it's made here, so I think the rationale is that we need to look at that, but the determination has not been determined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the department's timeline for introducing a bill to amend the *Hamlets Act* and the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This work will more likely be done through the Seventh Assembly, if they choose to take this on. That's the time frame we're looking at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to the sports and recreation funding program. The department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates indicates that the budget for Team Nunavut athlete support is increasing by 600 percent, from \$100,000 in 2024-2025 fiscal year to \$700,000 in the 2025-2026 fiscal year. How was the amount of this increase determined? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's with the past games that's taken place. There are two sets of games that we currently are, which is Arctic Winter Games and the Canada Games are the two major events that we go to. That is a determination to help with the increase. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to express that the smaller communities are usually left out, as I stated many times in this House. I want the Nunavut communities, every single one of them, to be consulted and have a chance to be in Team Nunavut, because majority of the time the regional hubs usually take the whole team. I just want to express that as being a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* I see the Minister wants to comment. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. I thank the member for continually raising this. That's the very reason, one of the reasons to increase it, is to allow the smaller communities to be able to participate. Because some of the teams are huge, and we want to get equal opportunity to everybody from Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Following the list of names on my list, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to delve into the Emergency Management Division. The main estimates in 2024-2025 indicated that a number of positions in the Nunavut Energy Management Division will be increasing from 11 to 18 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. How many of those new positions are currently filled? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it's for the safety services, the whole division is 12 out of the 23. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Sorry, I may have misheard that, Mr. Chairman. Did the Minister say there's 20 positions in Emergency Management Branch? Can I get confirmation of that, please.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok, if you can confirm the number of positions. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. In the Nunavut Emergency Management, we're looking at the wrong box here, sorry. Five of 26. There are 26 positions under the program. If I may, could I ask my deputy minister to clarify what I just said these numbers are. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Cronin.

Ms. Cronin: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question.

For the Nunavut Emergency Management we have a total of 19 percent positions and we have currently five that are vacant. Can I correct that, please? We have five that are filled of the 19. My apologies.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Still just a little bit confused on the numbers. I understand that there's 19 positions in the main estimates from last year. We had approved an increase up to 18 positions. Can I get confirmation, was there a new position added or was there something that changed in the structure of the division with the amalgamation or separation, however you want to phrase it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* As we're on the same subject here we'll go directly to Ms. Cronin.

Ms. Cronin: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you member for the question. If I could kindly ask that Deputy Minister Seeley take this one. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. If I understand, the question is about Nunavut Emergency Management as the division. I believe the numbers have been given on the total number of staff and vacancies.

As far as additions to the division, we did re-profile internally to create a business continuity manager position, which is currently staffed within that division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that update, thank you. Also in the Nunavut *Emergency Measures Act* that was passed way back in 2007, there are a number of sections, specifically 5 through 9 of the legislation, that provides for the preparation of emergency management programs on the part of the government institutions and municipal councils. These sections of the legislation have not yet been brought into force. What is the government's current timetable of bringing these sections of the *Emergency Measures Act* into force? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I stated earlier, we are waiting on at least three departments to get their territorial emergency plans together. Once that is done, the implementation of those sections will proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that information. On November 17, 2022 the department issued a Request for Proposals 2022-69, titled "Emergency Response and Business Continuity Planning." The request for proposals closed on December 15, 2022. As of today what is the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the request for proposal was awarded. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): *Mat'na*. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that. The request for proposal closed a little over two years ago. Can I just get an update of the status of the actual work that was done, other than that the contract was awarded. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: My apologies, trying to get into new ministership as of April 1, and listening in at the same time. I know I'm good at multitasking but sometimes I'm not great, so I do apologize for that.

But with that contract had done is allowed for the departments to get their emergency plans in place so there is, as I mentioned, at least three of them that still need to get done. That work is through that request for proposal. That's the work that's being done so that we can comply with the legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Minister, and Chairman. In what manner is the minister going to be able to update the committee or the House when those plans are completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this spring is our target. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the department's draft 2025-2026 business plan, it indicated that the Emergency Management Division has "made several service and program improvements including the decentralization and enhancement of the search and rescue program to provide better services to all members of municipalities."

What specific enhancements has been made to the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Chairman, through you could I ask Deputy Seeley to respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the member for the question. Nunavut Emergency Management has made a number of service improvements over the past year, starting with consolidating the office of the fire marshal into the Emergency Management Division.

Secondary to that, the division has taken on a full review of the search and rescue grants contribution policy. That work was supported by a series of collaborative gatherings with search and rescue officials from Nunavut communities to get their input into what key areas they required support. This work was further supported by additional funding administered through the municipal funding program within the current fiscal year to support municipalities in hiring, if they choose to go in that direction, safety personnel within the municipalities.

One additional very important service improvement that was made over the past year was allowing both first responders from local fire departments and ground search and rescue volunteers to access employee assistance support line and counselling. The same services that is available to Government of Nunavut employees is now made available to those important volunteers. Those are some of the examples of service improvements over the past year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Following the list of names, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my colleague's question earlier, for clarification concerning the act or review of a particular act that hinges on the changes and what the changes will be on the act. So could you explain to us with respect to hamlets and cities, I'm referring to the villages act. What expectations or if you can elaborate a little further, expectations we should expect, something changes or if it's a drastic change that is part of your review. That is my question. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. The Nunavut Association of Municipalities, NAM, as we call them, we will be asking what further regulations we should include during this process of review, and through that we will identify areas that need to make improvements, perhaps by way of contributions or elsewhere in support towards this. And that is in the process at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to another question asked earlier, last year, January 2023, the review on human (interpretation ends) resource needs of non-tax-based municipal corporations, on March 2022. The department had

“determined that additional research will be required to allow for funding core municipal positions.”

As base funding component of the municipal funding program, it was already asked what the timeline for this work is, but to me, my question is like what is going on. (interpretation) What more details will be required? That is the question I wanted to ask. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat’na*. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to applaud our good minister of the day to getting this review go through. Also as of last year he advocated for more municipal funding through the municipal funding formula to enhance the hamlets’ human resource capacities.

Each municipality have their different strengths and weaknesses, and that’s what was identified. And so what our government did is that we increased the municipal funding formula up to \$3.6 million and gave it to each of the communities and was told, you decide which area of capacity are you in dire need, and as a municipality it’s your decision in terms of where you want to resource for the work, all the good work that they do within the municipalities. So that’s what’s going on.

We’re beginning to continue to do this. And also we’re all trying to find ways of how else can we resource. So for example on the search and rescue side, we have that meeting that took place in terms of identifying what resources are needed. So we will continue to work very closely with the municipalities and to find out where they want to go and what resources they need. And I think from my perspective, it’s a municipal decision that needs to be done, not necessarily a government decision what the municipalities need to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat’na*. I have no more names on my list under Supporting Communities Branch. Community Service, Supporting Communities Branch, total operations and maintenance to be voted on \$104,082,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to K8, Grant Summary, Supporting Economies. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon Minister, and your officials. Minister, your department’s draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates “a comprehensive program review meeting was conducted in April 2024 marking a key milestone in the evaluation of the grants and contribution policy and its associated programs. The review process is ongoing and is on track for completion by March 2025.”

It's now March 2025. What specific changes to the policy and its associated programs are being actively considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that work is fully in full gear and that's taking place right now. It's at the policy staff level right now, in terms of looking at our policies. As I stated, a lot of our policies are outdated in terms of sunset clauses and that, and so that's the work that's taking place right now and that we need to get done and that we have a number of policies and programs that we definitely need to update. That's what that work would be doing.

Mr. Chair, through you, if I may, I know we switched pages. Can I switch witnesses? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Does the committee agree to let the Minister switch witnesses?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the new witness, and escort the old witness out.

Mr. Akeegok, if you can reintroduce your new witness to the committee. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Mr. Chair I'm really proud to reintroduce Mr. Adam Fisher, our Assistant Deputy Minister for Economic Development. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the responses. Minister, on page 148 of your business plan, under Supporting Economies it states:

“Supporting Economies Branch is dedicated to enhancing the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut by fostering diverse and sustainable economic opportunities. It encompasses five key divisions, community operations, business development, tourism and culture industries, minerals and petroleum resources, and fishing and sealing.”

Now, I've spoken many times now in this House that Agnico Eagle Mines will be shutting down operations north of Baker Lake. It will be three years this summer, so mid 2028. How is the department going to be working with the community with these five key divisions, it will be for now, on how to help Baker Lake supporting their own local economy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to applaud the hamlet of Baker Lake for starting a committee that is leading up to the mine closure that's coming up in three years. We've been invited to be part that have and we were very pleased to be proud of that. I think it should be beyond the scope of just closure, because there is going to be an economic blow into the community. So we need to find ways of helping and assisting through that forum. So that's the way that I envision that this take place what our member just questioned me about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. As the minister is very well aware of, Baker Lake, having visited my beautiful community numerous times, how does the minister envision helping the community of Baker Lake with four of the five key divisions that the minister has in his Supporting Economies business plan? Would it be how to develop a new business or fishing and sealing? What would be best for Baker Lake to help our economy, to sustain our economy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, there will be a combination of everything, I would say. For example, we have just had our fishing symposium here, and to see if there's communities that want to get into fisheries. When I was visiting the community, thanks to my colleague for his invite, and he arranged a number of meetings, which there's like very two active fishers that want to get into fisheries. I think that's one way that I directed our staff to get in and help assist with that. We have our community operations go and visit the communities and look at the economic opportunities that could take place.

We do have our community economic development officer in the communities, too, and that allows us to sort of see what the community is looking for, whether it's on tourism and that. So those are the eyes and ears that we do have within the community. And those, the staff that are going in, are aware of that closure that's coming and the impact that's going to have on the community.

So we will continue to look for ways of helping a very independent community to remain independent, and not really reliant on others. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister, and I appreciate the continued work, collaboration between your office and the community of Baker Lake,

because we as Baker Lakers would love to limit the number of new income support clients, so we would love to be prepared and hopefully we can create something new towards that.

I would like to move along to country food distribution. The 2020-2021, 2021-2022 combined annual report on the administration of your department's country food distribution program was tabled in the Assembly on February 23, 2024. When will the 2022-2023 and 223-2024 annual reports be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if we can complete them this spring, we are planning to table them in the spring session. We're going to try to have them all completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. The country food distribution program policy sunsetted on March 31, 2022. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's 2024-2026 business plan indicated that "a formal review of the country food distribution program policy was completed in June 2023."

Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that "a study has been complete to track key outcomes from the country food distribution program, including benefits to harvesters, food security improvements, community harvesting initiatives, training projects in the operation of harvesting infrastructure. This work is expected to be completed by spring 2025."

It's almost spring 2025. What specific changes of program are being actively considered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that is under review, I don't want to sort of say what's all in there, but I want to assure members that that review has allowed us to sort of help rework the policy that I indicated that is being worked on. For this particular one that we have, we're behind the schedule, but the work is still ongoing in terms of trying to get the policy updated and the programs realigned for this program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. It's understandable that you can't say much about it right now. I have been wondering as well regarding country food distribution across the territory. Has your department or in partnership with Family Services looked at perhaps shipping various country foods to different parts of the territory as a way to share some of the catches that that might not be readily available in certain areas of Nunavut? Is that being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Poverty Reduction Working Group is an excellent forum to get all the experts in. Our department is participating in that front and we look at it as a government as a whole, and other partners in terms of how we can deliver our country food. That's one of the areas that we continue to seek and seek partners.

I think one good example that I can use is with our Nunavut government cooperation, is that they would ship foods to communities. So this is an ongoing and working very closely with all of our partners, in terms of trying to get country food readily available for all of our communities.

I believe during my question period was asked about the sales of it. And I think that's when we're thinking about our diversifying our local economy, I think there are good opportunities for communities to share, and through that forum, too. So there's different avenues that we're trying to take on all fronts, and I want to assure the members that that we're trying our best in terms of getting that out. And I thank the member for continually advocating for this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister. Will be my last question, I believe. Would the department work with Family Services and hunters and trappers organizations, perhaps, to trade country foods? White fish, lake trout, Arctic char, muktuk? There's all sorts of country foods that's not available in every community. Would the department be willing to look into that and when would we see a positive response? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think if we approve this budget it's an ongoing one that I hope we provide grants to the hunters and trappers that are doing that right now. What we do is provide funding to the hunters and trappers, and then they call their other communities close by and say we need char or we need Umingmak or tuktuk. So that's happening right now and that's something that I'll continue to advocate for, (interpretation) and we'll continue to do that. And the funding that we're

requesting in the budget, this is part of it. So it will be good if that would be approved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): According to my list, Mr. Malliki is next.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to expand on the question that was just asked. Can the member tell me where this is happening? Because I haven't seen it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): So the funding, we get requests for money from the communities, up to \$30,000, where individuals, this is with Inuit country food, where the local HTOs receive the funding because they are allowed to request for funding this department. And now on page K8 it's explained there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On June 8, 2016 the Government of Nunavut's report on review and reform of income assistance and economic development was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The report was prepared by Department of Family Services and the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

The report indicates that the department would "place a greater focus on job creations when reviewing ED&T programs."

The Government of Nunavut's most recent annual reporting on grants and contributions indicates that the department provided a total of \$20,542,486.19 in contribution funding to businesses, organizations, and individuals during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Approximately how many full-time and part-time jobs were created sustaining by this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't have those details analyzed yet, but it's something we continue to do through our monitoring and evaluation of each of our grants and contributions. And one of the requirements, if I recall, is how many full-time positions have been created or part-time is part of that reporting structure. It's something that we'll continue to monitor. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be ideal to have this information given to us in time, when we are doing budgets, to approve these large amounts of funding that the department is seeking. It would be adequate to have these questions answered by the departments. I just wanted to state that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* That was a comment. The Minister wants to comment on the comment, so Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to comment on a comment. Our grants and contributions are given to the third parties, and through the third parties they have to report back to us. That's what some of the delays are, is that it's not directly. If it was direct, then we would know how many PYs we were getting. These are grants and contributions that we provide to third parties, and it is on them to report how many staff are being created as part of this. I just wanted to comment on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): I'm done.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to pick up where Mr. Malliki went, where he left it and where the Minister just responded. As it was stated in Mr. Malliki's question, there is and I'm quoting from the business plan. On that report the goal is to place greater focus on job creation when reviewing ED&T programs. And I understand there's a reporting requirement from these third-party receivers of these funds, that the department may not have that information readily available. But according to what the plan is on this, that is a reportable fact or factor in receiving future funds.

I know Mr. Malliki asked how many full-time and part-time jobs were created or sustained by this spending, so I would like to think that the department has some of this information. It may not be up to today's date, but I think the overarching goal of these grants and contributions is to lead to more employment opportunities outside of government operations. So I would like to hear some actual numbers on this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, through you could I ask Mr. Fisher to respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question, Minister. This is something that the department recently has become very interested in figuring out. We are fully aware that in the past that we've not done a good enough job of tracking how many jobs come out of our grants and contributions, so we put a significant effort in.

We've recently got a monitoring and evaluation position that we've had a little bit of turbulence in, so that slowed down our research on what's happening. But for applications that come in, for applications that have a known or shown or they're going to say they create jobs, we are really making every effort to make sure we approve those applications.

Your guys' question is excellent. We're happy that you're on the same page as us, where we want to get to as well. I want to come back here in two or three years and really be able to show the jobs that our G&Cs are creating. That is what it's for. We realize that and we're working hard towards it. Hope that helps.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that response. Thank you.

I'm going to switch over to tourism strategy. In the draft 2025-2026 business plan it indicates that it has contracted out the development of a new tourism strategy, prioritizing increased visitation and economic impact. It states that work is under way with a draft expected to be completed by April 1, 2025.

Recent media has stated that at least one community has said it is closed to cruise ships this summer. How has this decision affected work on the new tourism strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. I had to double-check, because I don't think we had any closures in terms of for cruise ships, but we had had one that was requested and that's been resolved but the cruise ships are back.

One of the things that we do ask for as part of for the cruise ships is we ask all the hunters and trappers which areas they don't want to be disturbed, and we've got a good working relationship with the cruise ship associations, and they comply very well. That's the work, that part of our strategy is that we need to have a good working relationship with our communities and our associations that are coming in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good to hear. Within that same community back in December, it was reported that the hamlet was seeking three clear answers that weren't responded to in time to cover in the media, so I'll ask them here.

As I'm sure the minister knows, I'm talking about Pond Inlet with the Parks Canada staff moving into the space that was previously occupied. So there's three questions and I'll ask them one at a time.

So a clear explanation of the decision making process behind Parks Canada's move into the centre. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. That's the work that we do and we've got a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada in terms of the use of space for our facility. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It doesn't really answer my question. I understand there's a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada, but then why was the hamlet of Pond Inlet caught off guard by the Parks Canada staff moving into the building that they had previously occupied? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, everything that happened in Pond Inlet that took place, all that has been resolved, and the municipality that has occupied that building since it was built will continue to occupy that. It's a multi-use facility and it's, I think from my perspective, more of a misunderstanding that had to be resolved at the local level, and that's something that we have resolved now, in terms of the facility for our visitors centre in Pond Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't bother asking the other two questions. As the minister said, everything is resolved, but I do have a question. It was stated that the building is owned by Nunavut's Department of Economic Development and Transportation and operated by the Department of Community and Government Services. With the change in focus has there been any changes to the ownership or operation of

that building? And how is the hamlet updated on available opportunities with that facility? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as an as a result of the departmental changes, nothing changes. Through supporting economies, that's where we will have our operations and maintenance for the visitors centre.

The way it works is that the program department determines what programs are being made in the community and the building maintenance side and the building work side is done through our Community and Government Services, which will then now be Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut that will oversee the care and maintenance side of the building. And if there needs to be renovations and that, we go through our friends from, well, soon to be Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my first question or second question, I guess, first question on this topic, I had asked how the decision of the cruise ship closure to a community impacted work on the new tourism strategy. I know the minister stated that it had been resolved, but there's nothing to stop this type of circumstance happening again.

I know we've heard feedback from other communities that the cruise ships don't really spend a lot of money in the community, sometimes, for the amount of effort that goes to hosting hundreds of people coming into town all at once. So I can't imagine that it didn't have some impact on the planning for the new strategy, of not just cruise ships but other tourism opportunities. Obviously the goal is to make sure that people in the communities and outfitters and tourism operators maximize the benefit of any tourism opportunities in the territory, so I would like to get a little bit more detail on how these discussions impacted work on the draft new tourism strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, part of this strategy is to see, find facilities where we can attract more, in terms of cruise ships, and making sure that they leave behind a lot more funds for our local economy and something that we will continue to strive on.

For this particular one, I think a lot of it was that we need to have a good discussion between the municipality and Parks and ourselves, and in terms of how that building is going to be used. I think one of the comments that was on the media is that that won't be used on cruise ships no more, but like I said, we have resolved that, because Pond Inlet

has identified that place as a critical place to have cruise ships go in and out. And that's something that we will continue to advocate for, to make sure that we have the facilities to help facilitate such as cruise ships. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'm being a little unclear, but when I look at a strategy, especially if you're developing a strategy, the minister mentioned they plan on having discussions with tourism operators and hamlets and such. To me those discussions would happen while you're developing the strategy, so that a strategy when it comes out has measurables, has actual plans on how to maximize the benefit, not just advocating for it. So I would like to get a little bit more information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's exactly what we do, is to try to advocate in advance the discussions that were specific to Pond is something that is outside of the norm, because we have worked very closely with the municipalities of Pond Inlet on the cruise. And through this budget, one of our good programs is called Cruise Ship Ready, and we go in advance to communities to advocate for what to expect and what opportunities you might want to consider. We'll continue that advocacy and the program u ready for that.

We do provide through this budget is to provide funding to help train, especially communities where cruise ships are increasing, or are new to the community to allow for that advance work so that the communities are ready and are prepared. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Following the list of names, Ms. Brewster. Sorry about that, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: My apologies Mr. Chairman. I had asked a question. I didn't anticipate asking another one, but the response drew more questions. I know I had used the topic of cruise ships as an example, and to get information out earlier, but what I'm talking about a tourism strategy it's all encompassing on different tourism activities across the territory.

I understand the situation in Pond Inlet may have been resolved, but there are other aspects of the tourism activity across the entire territory in other aspects that do need to continue work, and again, strategies in place to for outfitters or for business operators or for just local residents to be able to participate in the tourism economy.

We're talking about a tourism strategy. There's got to be more to what I'm hearing. I would like to get the minister to really lay out how this draft that's due in less than a month is taking those factors into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for highlighting that. Yes, the tourism strategy is not just about cruise ships; cruise ships is one aspect of it.

There is different tourism activities that are taking place throughout our territory, and each of those segments, part of our strategy is how we can help support and enhance this. A lot of the work that we do and that we partner with Travel Nunavut in terms of looking where we should start focussing on the markets. And that work is something that's as part of this strategy that's being done. And it's getting developed.

What we're doing right now is talking to the key stakeholders, not just the cruise ships, but other tourism partners, to see if that's aligning within the work that they're focused on, because we want to make sure we are inclusive and we are able to support all sectors of tourism. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* The second time, following the list of names on my list, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome, Minister, and your officials. Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that the arts and creative industry strategy has been finalized and is currently undergoing the approval process. Both the strategy and its accompanying implementation plan are expected to be finalized in spring of 2025. What a busy spring for public servants. Good work, people.

What are the most significant differences between the new arts and creative industry strategy and the current strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do have very busy staff so thanks for complimenting that. They do wonderful work in terms of trying to get more supports to every of our sectors.

For the artists' side, that work is work that we're trying to do is to try and enhance more. I think one of the most recent one is that we have partnered with a national organization to help promote our artists for this. So that's probably going to be one of the most significant ones to do. And this one, the work that we're doing right now, I'll be happy to share once that's approved in terms of for that strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that national organization, is it CARFAC? Is it the Inuit Art Foundation? Are you able to tell us who the partner is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I know it's federal. The actual name we're just trying to gather, so if you give us a few minutes or few seconds while we're doing the technology front, I will be able to get that name. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster, do you have another question while they're working on your other question? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: I sure do. I was very sincere in my gratitude to the work that public servants are doing. I saw one of the deputy ministers wearing their service pin this morning, so I went and looked for my last long-term service pin that I received, because we should celebrate long-term service.

While we're waiting for that I'll ask how is the new arts and creative industry strategy intertwined with the tourism strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for her first question, it's the Canadian Artist Representation, which is also in French. So it's all acronyms, so it's called CARFAC is the acronym. But it's English and French mixed together. We're having a difficult time not to try and use acronyms, so we're able to confirm with that.

With the tourism strategy and the artist is strategy all those and all those consultations with the key stakeholders are intertwined, and with our divisions that are drafting them do have an ongoing dialogue with each other and to support each other. So that's the benefit as a department.

And with this new department focussing the efforts, I think it's even going to enhance it more of having to work together very closely with key divisions.

We were tasked through Katujjiluta to make sure these of these sectors are reviewed and that we develop strategies, which is why we have very busy public servants and they are finalizing the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just out of respect for the organization I'll give it a shot again. I did say it last week so it's Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens. That's my French for the week again. I am really happy to know that there is that connection. I know that even the items tabled in the fall economic statement are kind of at a standstill right now, and I was very excited to see that that statement included protecting artists and creators' copyrights.

So what I'm hoping to hear is that that work to prepare for that is continuing and that our team at the Government of Nunavut is working on that. And if the minister could tell me whether or not that's so, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Great. I'll go back to the questions I had in mind. So I guess related to protecting artists and creators' copyrights, I'm curious about how the new arts and creative industry strategy could help artists to create their own branding and promotional materials that, I know we have the Inuit art tag; however, there's a real need to protect artist through branding, their own personal branding. Is that happening? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's active. I think one of the big reasons why we are partnering with this is because of the copyrights has been an ongoing issue. As one small territory that has very strong artists, copyrights, it's more of an international level. It's something I think partnering with the right national organization will start enhancing more of that, and more focus towards that and something that I'll continue to advocate for in terms of making sure the copyrights are for our artists. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the reasons that this is so important is because we know that in Nunavut over 70 percent of adult Inuit self-identify as artists, and we have this really incredibly unique thing that there are so many intergenerational artists within families. When it comes to artists' resale rights in particular, it's an

opportunity to build generational and intergenerational wealth in a way that isn't necessarily happening in the territory right now.

I would just like to hear more about how that's reflected in the strategy. For instance, I know that there used to be an ongoing list tracking Inuit artists and other artists in Nunavut, and when it comes to a resale, like if that does happen, one of the things that we all need to do is be able to track down artists and know where they are. So is that happening? Is there a list? Is there a plan to figure out that issue and many others related to that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is a very good suggestion that I'm going to bring to my department. It's something that we will definitely see if that's part of it. And that's going to be a very good thing to have.

Right now in terms of some of the examples, the support that we're trying to get through our budget is that we want to give the artists some business skills, so offer them business skills training is one way of ensuring that the artists knows about their products and the value of their product. I think that's critical. And that's something that we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Another unique aspect of artists in Nunavut is many artists are multimedia artists. Artists, really, I think we were sustained by the arts during COVID. I think everybody can remember back to how important it was to be able to view media arts in order to help pass the time and uplift the spirits. We witnessed in 2016 Gord Downie united the country through his arts, and he developed such a huge amount of knowledge about Indigenous people and our experience in the country.

What I also want to know about within that creative industry strategy is how it's focussing on that whole issue of artists who may be print artists, but also who are musicians or filmmakers. How is the focus on an artist as an individual, in terms of being able to grow their art and to receive funding to do that? Because it does cost money to create art. So if I could hear about that I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is the progression of our territory that's taking shape and something that we'll continue to support in terms of any new or emerging artists whether it's visual, and that. That's something that we'll continue to incorporate within the strategy and move forward.

I think there's this one industry, especially here in the territory, that we are now starting to see people getting into that, and it's something that we need to support very much so. And for us to do that and some of the videos that are coming out and making sure that we help support them.

I think one of the critical things that we want to make sure is that we do support them. Far too often some of these emerging artists do get a lot of lateral violence as part of our social media, but it's one that I think we need to celebrate a lot of this and we need to make sure that they are equipped.

And so I really appreciate your comments and your questions related to this, because that is the heart and soul of our strategy that we are trying to develop, is to ensure that the artists benefit and the artists are recognized and rewarded appropriately. It's something that we'll continue to fight for within our supporting economies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. AGAIN the minister seems to have anticipated my next question, and I'm really happy that you brought up the issue of mental health related to the arts. What we know is that the act of telling our stories is healing, and it's also important to engage every generation in building knowledge of our experience as a people.

I would like to hear a little bit more about how this new strategy is drawing on not just the tourism strategy, but also the mental health strategy and any other strategy; the elders strategy. Are there connections? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, yes, it's very connected. I think one of the things that our premier has tasked us to do is have a government as a whole, look at everything with the government as a whole, not just siloed. And so arts has connection with mental health and all that. I think it's one that we're going to continue to work and strive towards.

One of the good examples that I want to share is that we are developing videos that's going to help support artists in terms of what's available. I think those are using the social media on the good side, so that artists can be well informed. That's something that we'll continue to strive for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that response. Is there still work under way to create a new artist organization for the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. That's in the strategy, to create that again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really want to see this strategy. So when will the new arts and creative industry strategy be tabled in the Legislative Assembly thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. It's going through the approval process, and depending how much feedback that we get will determine the timeline. If there's not a whole lot of going back and forth, it should come out sooner but it's right, as part of our strategies there is a comprehensive approval process that we go through, even with our key stakeholders and other organizations, such as the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

It is going through that right now and it depends on how much feedback that we get and whether we need to address that or proceed. That's something that's in the moment right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, do you think that process will conclude before the dissolution of the Sixth Assembly or will it happen after? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mut'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is our goal, is to get it done before. I'm passionate about it, too, and I want to see that happen within the term of my tenure as the new Minister of Community Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: I'm actually done but I'll just say (no interpretation). Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>>Laughter

Chairman: *Mat'na*. I won't ask the minister to sing back.

>>Laughter

Chairman: I will just follow the list of names. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it has initiated engagement with Nunavut Tunngavik as part of the process to finalize the revised mineral exploration and mining strategy. The question is, Mr. Chairman, what is the timeline for finalizing the new strategy, and the follow-up question is how is the new strategy expected to be different from the current strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the assessment case has been completed and reviewing with all sectors and with some of our international community, the consultation phase is now under way.

Whether it's going to be different or not, that is to be determined, because we are at the review stage, and getting the feedback right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just can't get enough of the Land Use Plan so I'll be asking a question on this one. The 2024-2026 business plan of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation indicated that the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Division would be leading the internal review of the recommended Nunavut Land Use Plan for the department, and supporting the Government of Nunavut in their evaluation of the plan.

The current departmental restructuring process includes the transfer of the responsible development division from the Department of Economic Development and Transportation to the department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. And the question is, Mr. Chairman, to what extent is your department currently involved in the review of the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our department is very involved with the review, working very closely with my colleague's department. It is one that is a very

active file that our department is involved in all the divisions that my colleagues just mentioned are involved. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you Mr. Chair. This will be my last one. Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it will collaborate with the Department of Environment as the lead agency on the development of the Nunavut Protected Areas Strategy and focus on supporting the Department of Environment's efforts to prepare policy options and recommendations for consideration by the next government during the transition process. The question is, Mr. Chairman, to what extent will the development of the strategy be impacted by the review of the Draft Nunavut Land Use plan, and the recent signing of the Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are all interconnected. It's something which is one of the probably the biggest reasons why it has taken this while to review the Draft Land Use Plan, is that all the work that has been taking place needs to make sure that it is well-balanced, whether before we proceed with devolutions and that. I think those are interconnected that we need ensure that we work very close to each other.

In terms of the marine protected areas, that's coming from a federal initiative through climate change, and that's something that's also part of the additional work that we do, in ensuring that Nunavummiut are involved and where Nunavummiut can help with economic opportunities. I think that's why my department has been very proactive in part of these deliberations working very closely with my colleague at the Department of Environment to ensure that we take every opportunity that's being made available. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* (interpretation) As for my list, Mr. Kaernerker.

Mr. Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, Minister, and your staff. With respect to the estimates for 2025-2026 here in K9, the grants and contributions that I'm referring to, we have 86 or 90 million dollars grants in your 2025-2026 plans.

I'm not just using this as an example, but it was mentioned earlier on country foods by the MLA for Baker Lake. It mentioned (interpretation ends) for the fiscal 2025-2026 a study has been completed to track key outcomes from the country food distribution program including the benefits to harvesters, food security improvements, community

harvesting initiatives, training projects, and operations of harvesting infrastructure. The community freezers, I believe.

Now, how did the department and other stakeholders such as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated or the federal counterparts, what kind of plans were put in place? And in that matter, Mr. Chair, were my constituents of Amittuqmiut, part of Igloolik and Sanirajakmiut, will be able to take part in this study? What is the outcome of this. Can the minister elaborate further, if there's going to be any expectation in completing of this study? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a critical key stakeholders, the two communities that he referenced will be involved and be consulted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, our constituents in the smaller communities, we should have the opportunities and they know in the area every tourism that we can focus on arts, mining, and what further training may be provided, as especially in the area of mining.

Moving on, (interpretation ends) when it comes to the grants and contribution policy, looking at the total budget here, what kind of a research is the department looking into whether it comes to amending the grants and contribution policy? Who played a role in that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as part of the review we do talk to the key stakeholders. Those are the ones that are involved, and if it's for the community freezer then we talk to the hunters and trappers or the hamlets, because each community is different in terms of running the community freezer program. So we would be talking to them and looking at what we can do better and what more enhancements we can try and do.

Also as part of this we always look for ways of leveraging more. I think food poverty, poverty reduction is one good forum that all key stakeholders get involved and allow for very good discussions and to determine which areas are to be targeted, whether it's for government or private industry or the locals alone.

One of the comments that he mentioned about, that there are a lot of opportunities for the communities that they can try and capture, I encourage every community to look inside themselves and see what they want to do. There's programs readily available, and not necessarily don't wait for the government to do it. I think the timing is now, when we would like to see a lot of these investments come through.

It's something I will continue to advocate and support for our local economies. I probably have the smallest riding, the smallest population per riding, and it's something that I always see what the small communities needs and that in those lens. We need to continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the information on the subject, Minister. I would agree with you on that part, when it comes to diversifying our economy and not just focussing on the commercial fisheries. But there are priorities set when it comes to the distribution of our country food. As we all know, elders are always thinking of their country food.

Here's my reason for bringing this up. The elders centre in Rankin Inlet will be owning pretty much next month, so that is where I'm coming from, to have our country food distributed throughout Nunavut, and like Baker Lake and as explained, they have caribou and we have the fresh umingmak; let me put it that way. So that's the term and I will probably have other questions.

But still on this subject with the contributions and the policy issue, were the other stakeholders involved when it comes to planning or creating a new policy where elders stakeholders such as Nunavut mine training, were they also included in this planning process? That will be my last question for now. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na* Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that in Hall Beach the fermented walrus meat they make there is delicious, and it would be good, if they would be able to, to be sold to or be distributed to all other communities. Also this past week we were shown a movie of a boat dragging two walrus. I hope they can sell sea dipped ribs out of those, because we can do things like that. We've just not trying to do it in the smaller communities. It's definitely positive.

To use Grise Fiord as an example, there was a young boy who is trying to become a hunter. He would go hunting and sell his catch to the local community, to anybody who was interested, by computer. And he provides his own gas and boats with his catch. so it would be good if the people from Hall Beach can have their fermented walrus or fresh

walrus available for sale. I'm sure they would be sold very easily. I just wanted to add that to what my colleague was saying.

So the different things like mining and tourism, we're making plans on how we want to deal with those. So everybody's involved.

We were talking about mining. Then we involve people who are trying to become miners and also work with prospectors and also with Arctic College. We do work closely with them when we are looking at creating these programs. Thank you for asking those questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Due to time restraints, this person will be the last person on this page to ask any questions. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me again. In response to your response to a question from our colleague, I wanted to talk about the sale of country food. If they try to do it, they can sell what they make and what they catch. So what I want to say is I believe it's very important to talk about it. There are barriers that our very professional hunters have encountered. They know how to butcher animals properly, but in the smaller community there's a barrier. There's no lab to test the meat. They really encounter government barriers when they don't have a lab to check the food at.

I know there are very able hunters that are very ready, I will say they are so ready. There are some people, Inuit in Nunavut are so ready to sell, but because of the regulations, too many regulations had really hit that door not going forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you. I agree there are barriers. We don't try to create barriers for people who want to sell their catch within Nunavut. There are very a lot fewer barriers in Nunavut, and if they want to sell their country food, they can. And if they're going to sell them outside of Nunavut or to one of the retail stores, that's where the barriers are. It's because the food needs to be inspected properly, to make sure there is nothing in it that can make us sick. This is for people who want to sell country food outside of Nunavut. I agree there are very many regulations and laws about food. When you trying to sell food I think the whole world has laws like that.

But within Nunavut, if we want to sell within Nunavut we have more freedom. I just wanted to add that. Thank you to my colleague for bringing this up. Thank you.

Chairman: We are on K8, Community Service, Supporting Economies. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$37,158,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to K3. Details of expenditures to be voted, Community Services. Detail of expenditures to be voted, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$162,378,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree the Community Services is concluded?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister, brief closing comments. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: My colleagues, thank you very much for all your good questions about this new department. It will become live on April 1. ,the Department of Community Services and I'm going to be the minister of this new department and I'm really glad to lead it. So I completely welcome our staff and all the people who work at the hamlets and government liaison officers, welcome all of you. I want to work with closely with all of you.

Our precious staff, they do some great work. So we will try to make the transition nicely, smoothly.

Thank you for approving our budgets. It's great we're going to have all that staff working under us and we'll try to do good work on your behalf. And I thank my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* The witnesses may go and we'll take a five-minute break to change departments. The next department is Department of Finance.

>>*Committee adjourned from 15:09 to 15:18*

Chairman: Good afternoon, folks. I would like to reconvene our Committee of the Whole meetings. Before us we have the Minister of Finance. Minister, do you have any officials you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Does the committee agree to have the Minister's official appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness to the witness table. Minister Kusugak, if you can introduce your officials to the committee then proceed your opening comments. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues. To my left is Ms. Hillary Casey, Director of Corporate Policy, Department of Finance, and to my right is Daniel Young, Deputy Minister of Finance.

Thank you, Chair and Members. I am here to discuss the Department of Finance's 2025-2026 Main Estimates and Business Plan. The Department of Finance plays a central role in the government and supports core financial governance and administrative functions so that other departments and public agencies can deliver programs and services to Nunavummiut.

In 2025-26, we are seeking an appropriation of almost \$110.9 million for our operations, an increase of \$2 million over the previous year.

Of our total budget, about one-third relates to the Department's core operations. The remaining two-thirds is allocated to centrally administered funds. These are expenses that the Department of Finance manages on behalf of the wider government.

After setting aside the centrally administered funds, 80 per cent of Finance's budget is used to pay our staff. We have not added any new positions this year.

The Department requires \$7.7 million for other operations and maintenance costs. More than half of this is for software and licensing used by all government departments.

Through this budget, we are seeking \$72.9 million for the following central expenses:

- \$25.1 million for employee medical travel. This is in line with last year's budget. We know costs are increasing in this area and we will be monitoring it closely.
- \$16.5 million for energy subsidies.
- \$11.6 million to pay for the government's insurance premiums.
- \$9.3 million for the costs we pay as an employer for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.
- \$8.2 million for accounting expenses related to post-retirement employee benefits; and
- \$2.1 million for the Nunavut Child Benefit, a grant paid to low-income families with children, through the income tax system.

Most of our budget is consistent with last year. The temporary carbon tax exemption on home heating fuel has significantly reduced the amount of carbon tax that Nunavummiut pay. Because of this, we have reduced the budget for the Nunavut Carbon Credit slightly. More work will be done before setting the credit's rate for the new benefit year, which begins in July.

Mr. Chair, this completes my comments. I am available to take questions about this proposed budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Finance.

The department's proposed 2025-2026 operations and maintenance budget is \$110,858,000. This represents a 1.9 per cent increase from the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is decreasing from 233.0 in the 2024-2025 fiscal year to 232 in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. The 2023-2024 ministerial letters of expectation to the boards of directors of the government's five major public agencies and territorial corporations were tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the Minister of Finance on November 3, 2023. Responses to the letters of expectation were subsequently tabled during the 2024 winter and spring sittings of the House. Mr. Chairman and Members, during the minister's recent appearance, the standing committee was advised that the practice of preparing ministerial letters of expectation has been discontinued.

The department's 2024-2026 business plan indicated that it had been "working with territorial corporations on developing memoranda of understanding through the Territorial Corporations Committee."

The standing committee encourages the government to ensure that these new governance tools include strategic direction to the relevant public agencies and that they be renewed and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on an annual basis.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the Department of Finance provides support to the Financial Management Board. A government-wide issue for which the Financial Management Board has responsibility is the size of the public service. The total number of positions in the government continues to increase. The government's proposed 2025-2026 main estimates indicate that there are approximately 5,527 positions in the government's

departments and major public agencies and territorial corporations, excluding the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

This represents an increase of approximately 20 positions over the number accounted for in the 2024-2025 main estimates, and an increase of approximately 400 positions from the 2021-2022 main estimates.

Mr. Chairman and Members, It is important for the Financial Management Board to be mindful of the need to control the growth in the number of government positions being added to organizational charts at a time when departments, public agencies and territorial corporations continue to face significant challenges in filling their existing vacancies.

Mr. Chairman and Members, it is also important to note that approximately one-third of the government's total operations and maintenance spending is now allocated to compensation and benefits for its own workforce. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, this amounts to almost three quarters of a billion dollars.

On November 8, 2016, *Taking Steps to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm in Nunavut* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The department's 2023-2026 business plan indicated that the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission was currently "researching and developing agency store models that can be used to serve smaller communities that choose to have local access to lower-alcohol-content products."

The standing committee notes that although this specific initiative has not been referenced in the department's more recent business plans, the department's 2025-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the upcoming fiscal year is to "review the organizational structure of the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission to support the continued growth and expansion of the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission."

Mr. Chairman and Members, members emphasize the importance of ensuring that any decision to allow in-person, over-the-counter retail sales of alcohol in a Nunavut community is based on the results of a formal plebiscite, as have been held in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet.

The new territorial *Liquor Tax Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly during the fall 2022 sitting. However, it has not yet been brought into force. The standing committee encourages the government to complete the necessary work to publish regulations under the Act prior to the dissolution of the current Legislative Assembly later this year.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the territorial *Cannabis Act* received Assent on June 13, 2018. Section 64 of the legislation requires that a review of the Act be undertaken every five years. The department's 2024-2026 business plan indicated that "a legislative review of the federal *Cannabis Act* is currently underway." The standing committee notes that

the final report from the federal review was published in March 2024, approximately one year ago. The standing committee looks forward to updates on the status of this work.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is to "develop a plan to implement the Public Sector Accounting Board's new reporting model to the public accounts that will come into effect on April 1, 2026." The standing committee looks forward to examining this issue at its upcoming televised hearing on the 2023-2024 public accounts.

Mr. Chairman and Members, that concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates business plan of the Department of Finance. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Will do any members have any general comments before we proceed to the detailed questions? I see none, so members go to branch summary, corporate management, C4. Members go to C4, Corporate Management. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Minister and officials. I guess I would like to start off with the department's IEP plans, Inuit employment plans. I would like to note that the department's total Inuit employment is at 37 percent and Iqaluit's Inuit employment is at 24 per cent. But also would like to note that the senior management and executive level positions are at zero per cent Inuit employment.

I was wondering if the minister would be able to highlight some of the current mentorships, internships, and succession planning as well as the plans for this upcoming fiscal year. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the biggest challenges we have with recruitment in Finance is finding, in the senior management, is getting qualified Inuit and certified Inuit that can work at that level. It's a very high level kind of work, and we are working within our department to try to get as many Inuit into the finance department as we can. And if I could have my deputy maybe respond in a bit more detail on the challenges and where we're going with that through you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, everything the minister said is correct, and we have had quite a challenge in recruiting Inuit into the Department of Finance. To try and tackle that, one of the things we've implemented in the last several months is a new tracking tool through our departmental human resources section, and that tracks all of our Inuit employees from the time they're hired, what challenges they are having, if there's more training needed to go to the next level and things like this so that we can help

provide the tools need to do promote from within in Finance. But we're early days and we have yet to see the benefits of that. We're hoping in the next year or two we'll really see the benefits every that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Before I go back to Mr. Lightstone, just going forward on for the rest of the departments, I will recognize members only once in each branch. So get all your ducks lined up because you'll only be recognized once. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister and Mr. Young. It's great that the department is focussing on tracking the Inuit employees within the department. I do know that there are a lot of long-term Inuit employees that have worked within the Department of Finance, so the next question I would like to ask is how many new employees are on educational leave; and is there plans to send potential employees on education leave in the upcoming fiscal year. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm aware of one employee that's on a training plan and we plan to be working towards increasing the number of employees that would like to participate in a training plan to further their employment to gain higher experience, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. That's good that there's one Inuk employee that has a training plan.

As you mentioned, an accounting designation does require specific qualifications, including a degree. Has this Inuk employee with the training plan, does that include education leave? And if not, again, for the upcoming fiscal year is there specific budget or an amount of employees Inuit employees that you would like to send off on education leave? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the question. We do have one on education leave at the moment, and wherever possible we are encouraging our Inuit employees who would like to further their education to participate in gaining further education and training in their field, and encourage them to go on education leave if they so wish and we definitely work through our Inuit employment plan to ensure that possibility.

Mr. Chairman, it's very important that we get as many Inuit especially in finance management as we can, and we'll continue to do better and work towards getting as many Inuit as we can in finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. That is very excellent to hear. As I mentioned, there are a lot of long term Inuit employees within the Department of Finance that are capable, that have the knowledge necessary to move up the ladder. When was the last time the department had submitted an application for the Sivuliqtiksat internship program? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not aware the last time the department has done that, Mr. Chairman. But having said, that one of the biggest challenges we have within the department is anytime we're training up Inuit in the financial management field within the department, they get to a certain level and they become very high commodity for other departments to get a hold of Inuit with financial background and financial strength. One of our biggest challenges within Finance is to continue to hold onto them and build their education and so on through our department, and we could keep them. It becomes a challenge to keep them as many departments and non-government organizations in the private sector are constantly looking for more Inuit qualified in financial management and in the finance field.

I encourage, if there are any listening out there I encourage them to get into the finance field. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Minister, for recognizing that Inuit with financial experience and financial background are very attractive. I hope that you will express or convey that to our current youth in high school. I think that's very important for them to know. I guess any last question on the topic of IEP is, has the department identified a position that it can advertise for or submit an application for the Sivuliqtiksat internship program. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have had one employee go through that program, and every time the Sivuliqtiksat program has callout, we've notified our staff to encourage them to participate in that program. And we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. I'm grateful that the Department of Finance reminds directors and program managers that this application process is open, but I really hope that express direction will be given to the department to actually identify one position to apply for in advance of the next callout.

I would like to move on to the next topic. The Department of Finance is responsible for the P3 policy, public-private partnership, which is very ideal use of investing GN capital funds. I would like to ask, as the department or the Government of Nunavut, as the minister announced today, the government's debt cap or borrowing limit has been increased in excess of \$1 billion, there's a substantial amount of room available. The next question I would like to ask: Has the Department of Finance identified any potential avenues to utilize the next P3, and/or has any department expressed interest to the minister? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently we have not gone into or received any interest in a public-private partnership at this time from any department or anywhere else, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: I'll move on to my next topic with regards to the liquor and cannabis management. As was indicated, one of the current priorities is to review the organizational structure of the Liquor and Cannabis Commission to support growth and expansion. What kind or what specific changes are being considered? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of different things we're looking at, and one of them is for example the possibility and where it can become possible or available for small communities to be able to have alcohol vending alcohol or cannabis vending in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I would like to I guess focus now on the Iqaluit beer and wine store. It has become a problem area in the community, and every summer the radius of public intoxication continues to grow surrounding the beer and wine store, and making its way down to the core of the community. And not to mention the actual physical building, and more importantly parking, is quite unsafe. Is

there any intention to address those specific concerns in the Iqaluit beer and wine store?
Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the question, but it becomes a very hard topic to deal with, in that we are responsible for selling alcohol in that store, but what happens once they get outside the store is not really responsibility of our department.

Having said that, in the previous summer we participated in having security outside the store and close to the grounds, but we definitely will be looking at if there is a need to do that again this summer to be doing that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Remaining on topic, as the department is reviewing the organizational structure of Liquor and Cannabis Commission to support growth and expansion, has there been consideration given to move or relocate the Iqaluit beer and wine store to address growth and expansion needs? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we almost were there, I believe, about a year and a half ago, but things changed and we were not able to get a better located building to be selling the alcohol. But we have budget this year to take a good hard look at finding a more adequate location to be selling the alcohol in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, that's really great to hear, that you're allocating a budget specifically for looking into relocating the beer and wine store. Do you have an expected timeline as to when that could potentially come to be? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, we'll be looking at it this year. I can't give a hard timeline of when we will have those results but we will be taking a good look at it, I figure, over the next six to eight months. We'll take a look at what's available, where's a good place and all that. But it will definitely take few weeks or months to figure out

exactly where and what we want to do with the beer and wine store location in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* I have no more names under corporate management. Finance, Corporate Management. Total operations and maintenance to be voted \$5,423,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to page C5, Finance. Fiscal Management. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. I've got five different topics to cover under this branch. As I previously mentioned, the Minister of Finance has the ability and the authority to make lots of decisions that impact the cost of living for Nunavummiut, one being the Nunavut electricity subsidy and the child tax benefit. First I would like to focus in on the Nunavut electricity subsidy and more specifically the subsidy that's provided to entrepreneurs, medium and small businesses.

Recently during question period I identified that there's far too few businesses utilizing this energy subsidy, and that the revenue or sales ceiling is far too low and disqualifies far too many entrepreneurs from utilizing this.

So the first question is, has the Department of Finance considered amending the corporate or commercial aspect of the Nunavut Energy Subsidy Program. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that question and when I received that question from my colleague in the House last week, I believe, it gave alarm bells to myself and it's something that we definitely will be taking a look at. It's been a while since a hard review on that rate has been looked at to see if it is so low, if we can improve on that to make it more attractive. But it is something since our conversation at question period that we'll be looking at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I first brought up these cost of living issues back in 2023, both with regards to Nunavut electricity subsidy for businesses as well as the child tax benefits. Now I would like to focus on the child tax benefits. The 300 a year pales in comparison to Quebec \$2,300 a year provided to parents of low-income families, as well as the income threshold is far below the median average income in Nunavut, meaning the majority of Nunavut are ineligible to access this.

So I would like to ask specifically since I brought it up in 2023 what amendments have been considered to I guess improve the child tax benefit. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't made any amendments but it's been indexed on inflation each year, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I'll pick that up at another time.

I would like to move on now to another cost of living implication that the Department of Finance plays a role in, and that's the rising cost of insurance across the territory for pretty much every category, home owner, business, and so on. The insurance rates have been steadily climbing over the last number of years, and the Department of Finance has an insurance premium tax that's at a rate of 3 per cent, and the department is expecting 4.5 million in revenues to be collected from this insure premium tax.

When was the last time that the department took a good look at this insurance premium tax and determined whether it would be time for an adjustment? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this was something that was inherited from the Northwest Territories and nothing has changed since then. It's definitely something that we will be looking at to see where and how we can make improvements to better benefit and reflect Nunavummiut's needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for that commitment, Minister. With the way things are going, I think it would be a nice reprieve to actually see a reduction in our insurance premium costs.

I would like to move on to the next item. The liquor tax was passed in I believe 2022, as the Chair had mentioned in his opening comments. Has the minister set a timeline as to when that will be brought into force, and does the minister have any expected revenues that the GN will generate through the liquor tax. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have my deputy Mr. Young respond to that question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question. You're right, most everything in the act has passed the Legislative Assembly and ready to go. There are still some regulations that need to put in place. However, that's not the hurdle that is holding this up.

When we looked at implementing the liquor tax, we were going to need a new tax system which was going to cost several hundred thousand dollars, and because we are already spending more money on the new ERP system, we thought it be a more prudent use of resources to wait and build it into that new ERP system. In the meantime, we are still collecting markups through the liquor commission on almost all liquor sales, so it is accomplishing a lot of that already. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Young. That's excellent to hear that the CRP system has potential to actually generate some revenue with the rollout of the liquor tax.

Another issue that I've raised in the past on a few occasions is a lack of cannabis retailers and the fact that cannabis is in every community but there's only one community that has a cannabis retailer. So the majority of cannabis in Nunavut is fueled by the black market.

I was wondering if the department has received any applications for future cannabis retailers. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, other than the two in Iqaluit and one in Rankin, we haven't received any interest in that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, for that correction. Two communities with cannabis retailers. You've doubled the number of communities that I thought it was in.

Again, I previously identified this as an issue with the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation and Nunavut Development Corporation as a needed strategic approach to really curb the black market sale of cannabis in the territory and make cannabis safer and keep it out of the hands of youth, and so on, and generate additional revenues for the Government of Nunavut through the sale of legal cannabis.

I would like to ask if the minister would commit to working with the Minister responsible for Nunavut Business Credit Corporation and Nunavut Development Corporation to take a strategic approach to addressing the lack of Nunavut cannabis retailers in the territory. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's definitely something I can look into.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to add that the two retailers in Iqaluit and one in Rankin also do sales to outside the community. So they are doing sales to other Kivalliq, Nunavut communities. So they're not limited to just selling it in our communities, but to other Nunavut communities. But in terms of whether I should meet with those, like my colleague outlined, there's no reason why shouldn't be able to have that conversation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* We're under fiscal management at C5. I have no more names on my list. Finance, Fiscal Management, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$7,041,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to C8, Branch Summary, Comptrollership. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple questions here. In the department's 2024 through 2026 business plan, it indicated that it had completed an internal review of the financial administration manual's directive on grants and contributions. When will the updated directive be published? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just one moment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That document is being drafted right now. We should be able to publish it within the next month. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response. The Nunavut Association of Non-Profit Organizations recently released a pre-budget open letter to the Government of Nunavut concerning the administration of grants and contributions. To what extent will the department's changes to the financial administration manual directive address the association's concerns? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could I have Ms. Casey respond to that through you. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Ms. Casey.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the member for the question. The Department of Finance has been actively working with NANPO, the Nunavut Organization of Non-Profit Organizations, on grants and contributions reviewing any administrative barriers to that, including review of the financial administration manual directive to see what improvements can be made to remove some of the red tape that community organizations sometimes face.

That coalition of GN representatives, representatives from community organizations, and from the private sector is wrapping up its work and will be coming out with recommendations in the very near future. So we look forward to those recommendations to inform any changes coming forward from the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to hear especially the red tape, reducing the amount of red tape involved. And I know that was one of the main concerns that was raised, as well as access to multi-year funding so that there's limited resources in a lot of these non-profits to be able to do proposal writing, so I would like to get an update on that factor of the financial document. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* As we're on the same subject, I'll go directly to Ms. Casey.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question. In addition to that we are looking at things such as multi-year funding, which is currently allowed under the financial administration manual but looking at ways to better communicate that to the departments so that they're aware of how to design their grants and contributions policies in a way that allows for multi-year contributions, or perhaps core funding.

The comptroller division is looking at that right now. They are consulting with each department at present time, in addition to participating on an internal GN working group on grants and contributions, and the working group that I previously mentioned, with the Nunavut Association of Not for Profits. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* We're currently on C6, Comptrollership. I have no more names on my list. Finance. Comptrollership, total operation and maintenance to be voted on \$25,479,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, go to page C7, Finance, Centrally Administered Funds. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. I would like to return to the topic of insurance premiums, but the insurance premiums the GN pays for their own assets. The Minister stated in his opening comments that the GN is budgeting \$11.6 million for the government's insurance premiums.

As I indicated, the rate at which insurance premiums have steadily grown over the years is quite alarming and challenging for most. Can the minister indicate if there's been any sort of significant trend or increase in the GN's own insurance premiums. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when we take a look at the different premiums that the government does across the board, there's really nothing of any significance yet to outline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. That's great to hear. I would like to move on to the last topic, and that's post-retirement employee benefits. In January of this year I received numerous complaints from constituents, GN retirees, who saw their own health insurance contributions increase from \$54 to over 200. That's an increase of over 370 per cent, which is quite a challenge, especially for GN retirees that stay in Nunavut. I was wondering if the minister can provide some additional information on how this came about. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, This is unfortunately a run of unfortunate incidents. It's sounding like it was last-minute information, but this goes back in line back in 2018 when the government of the day wanted to put it in line with the federal employee pension fund program, when that was announced back in 2018. Then we had of course COVID. COVID happened and after that, post=COVID things just didn't line up properly.

Then during this government it was decided they were going to make the announcement in the fall. Unfortunately right about that time, before Christmas, when the information was being sent out through the mail, Canada Post went on strike.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not sitting here to give you excuses, but those are the unfortunate steps that happened, and it came across not so well received, and rightly so, by those retired government employees. Mr. Chairman, that's in a nutshell what happened. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. The minister had said that the decision was made in 2018 to go in line with the federal pension benefits. Can the minister give additional information as to why it would go in line with the federal pension program. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it was getting very costly. The federal government I believe has a 50-50 pension program, and in the case of Nunavut our pension contributions were significantly higher than 50-50. So it was decided that we would make it in line with the federal program where it's 50-50 shared between the government and the employee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just to follow up on Mr. Lightstone's question, I understand there was kind of two factors that contributed to this increase. One was as the minister mentioned, the alignment with the federal benefits, but there was also a significant increase in costs of coverage was mentioned in the public service announcement that went out.

Was there any discussion at the cabinet level to not throw both of these increases in at the same time, where there could have been a phased-in approach? I do understand the complexity and the challenges that came about putting it to the 50-50 alignment, and the number of years that it took to get to that stage. But coincidentally it also ran into an increased cost of coverage as well. Was there any thought put into decreasing the

immediate impact on our retirees and phasing it in instead of putting both jumps in at the same time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, this was an unfortunate incident. The phased-in approach or not, it was going to end up being 50-50 and there's increases every year on it, so it was felt best that we go to 50-50. That's the outcome, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do understand. That's why we put elect people to go into cabinet, to make these tough decisions, but it is still concerning. We've got a number of retirees that it's a significant portion of an increase without some kind of countering benefit to be able to put forward.

I'll leave that alone in our and I will go back to a favourite topic of mine, the Nunavut Household Allowance. I understand the minister earlier today said he would have a response for me on a yes-or-no question I asked earlier today.

My question is more of a procedural one. When the minister comes back with his yes answer, that people that are paying over and above the minimum eligibility amount on their rental costs as well as utilities, what's the process for the minister to change that, to accept the operations and maintenance costs into the rent amount. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, this proposal that my colleague and I have been having a few exchanges on over the last six to eight months, Mr. Chairman, is one that our department will share with other departments that are affected by this for their input, and then we'll try to land on an agreed spot and then at that point we'll bring it to cabinet and then hopefully we can move forward from that. In a nutshell that's what will take place Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just off the top of the minister's head, I would like to get an idea of some of the challenges that the minister may foresee in implementing this equity benefit. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, nothing real challenging in terms of show stoppers, but going through and trying to land at a fair number, what are the maximums and minimums, and where are we currently at and where do we want to go. So working that out, getting input, Mr. Chairman, I don't see any real challenges in this. It's just a more time consuming process that has to work through the system, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the information. I guess my next question would be, as the minister has stated he's going to get become to me before the next session, that will be in the next fiscal year, budget-wise. When my suggested amendment to the program is approved, would there be any type of a backdating opportunity for people that had previously applied for this program and were subsequently denied? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's one thing we'll have to take a look at when we're going through this to see if it is going to be backdated and how far back it would go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* We're under C7, Central Adminstered Funds. I have no more names on my list. Finance Central Adminstered Funds. Total operations and maintenance to be voted \$72,915,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go back to C3. Finance. Details of expenditures to be voted. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$110,858,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree we are concluded with the Department of Finance?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak, brief closing comments.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a lot of work ahead of us. I thank you for all your detailed questions and we'll get back to you, with those I said I would. I would like to thank my two colleagues sitting beside me and let's have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witness from the witness table, and we'll take a five-minute break to change departments with Arctic College.

>>*Committee recessed from 16:10 to 16:15*

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): I would like to call this committee to order. I would like to ask Minister Nakashuk, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Yes.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let minister's official appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. For the record, Minister Nakashuk, please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right president Jackie Price, and to my left director of policy, Sherri Young.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and Committee of the Whole members. I am pleased to present to you today Nunavut Arctic College's 2025-2026 Main Estimates and corresponding business plan.

Nunavut Arctic College maintains the operations laid out in the business plan based on its proposed budget. The College's budget is comprised of a base contribution from the Government of Nunavut and third-party funding. For the upcoming fiscal year, the College is seeking approval for \$48,125,000 from the Government of Nunavut.

This amount represents an increase of \$5,687,103 from the previous fiscal year. The increase will support the College in the following areas:

- Information Technology,
- Construction Trades program, and
- Employee Wage increase.

(interpretation ends) The College is presenting a \$1,812,103 increase to support the Information Technology division's efforts. The three key areas this funding will support include bandwidth, strategic oversight, and operational staffing. As College program delivery and student internet access and support fall outside of regular government

functions, the College is responsible for providing information technology and support to its students and instructors.

This funding will allow the College to meet its ongoing requirements in the continued roll out of the CANARIE Network across the territory and its ongoing support. Currently the network is available in 18 Nunavut communities. The new funding will support the roll-out of this network in six communities, including Arctic Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbor, Kimmirut, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Whale Cove.

As this committee will recall, the College has secured dedicated broadband from low earth orbit satellites.

To meet program delivery and to support the CANARIE network, the College will also use these new funds to ensure oversight and staffing for the College's information technology system is supported from the front line to management level.

Currently, the college's information technology functions fall under the management of the college's chief financial officer. This funding, if approved, will allow the College to establish a formal structure within the college to oversee its information technology needs, and maintain oversight on college-specific software, internet and hardware responsibilities.

In support of the Katujjiluta mandate and this government's commitment to Nunavut 3000, the college, along with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Department of Family Services, is requesting funds to enhance the ongoing and complementary efforts to support more Nunavut-based construction. A request of \$1,975,000 for 2025-2026 will help the College meet its proposed goals to support a range of learning and operational support. This support includes coordination for hands-on learning for students through the building of three new duplexes. These duplexes will provide much needed student family accommodation in Rankin Inlet, and are the result of a memorandum of understanding signed last year between the College, Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Pewapun Construction Limited.

The college appreciates the value of hands-on learning in construction trades. As such, the college is seeking additional funds to continue its unindentured apprenticeship efforts through direct building opportunities. This effort would require significant research, stakeholder engagement and coordination, and the college is seeking support to undertake this work.

Currently, the Sanatuliqsarvik Trade School offers Level 1 and 2 training in five construction trades. The College is also requesting financial support to offer levels 3 and level 4 training at Sanatuliqsarvik, allowing students to complete their apprenticeship training in Rankin Inlet.

To ensure students are well prepared for their learning, the college is also requesting funds for student supports like personal protective equipment, tools, and laptops. Finally, if approved, the College will use the new funds to pilot a condensed pre-trades program to engage with students looking for focused academic upgrading to write the apprenticeship exam.

The final new financial request is for \$1,900,000 in support of the wage increase following the Government of Nunavut's review of salaries and implemented increases.

With this budget, and as outlined in the proposed business plan, the College will also continue supporting the wide range of processes and requirements that go into delivering teaching and training in all its models, including online and blended learning, to continue supporting program delivery, reviews, and updates, and to continue to work with stakeholders in understanding training needs and opportunities.

Members, these opening comments are intended to provide you with an overview of key themes as they relate to the College's 2025-26 main estimates and business plan. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the chair of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development, I am pleased to make opening comments on the government's proposed 2025-2026 budget allocation for Nunavut Arctic College.

Chair, the GN's proposed contribution to Nunavut Arctic College is just over \$48 million for 2025-2026. The College's total operating budget will approximately \$71 million once third-party funding and revenue from tuition fees and other sources are taken into account.

Third party funding provides for the delivery of a number of programs. The committee encourages the College in its ongoing efforts to work with partners to develop and provide learning options at both the community and regional campus levels.

Such initiatives as the on-the-job trade skills training in collaboration with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Department of Family Services can not only increase capacity within the construction trade, but will have the added benefit of providing additional housing for student families.

Chair, programs offered by Nunavut Arctic College are critical to enabling Nunavummiut to access employment opportunities across the territory. The standing committee notes an increased reliance on remote course delivery in addition to in-person course delivery at the regional campuses and local community learning centres.

Members have expressed some concern with the lack of cultural awareness and student support provided through the remote learning delivery model.

At the same time, not all communities have equal access to the Internet, which means adult learners have fewer options for remote learning.

Chair, members support the proposed investments for the College's Information Technology division, including the ongoing expansion of the CANARIE network to more communities across the territory. Staff and students alike are increasingly reliant on internet access for access to services and program delivery.

During the appearance of the minister and representatives from Nunavut Arctic College to address the college's draft budget for 2025-2026, members were given to understand that not all community learning centres currently have adult educators, despite the positions being funded. The standing committee strongly encourages the college to address these gaps in staffing.

In addition to delivering adult basic education and other programs, adult educators can provide support to learners who are struggling with remote learning programs. Committee members again raised concerns with respect to the process by which the College determines what courses are delivered at the community level.

Residents have often expressed frustrations that local requests for specific programs to be delivered in the community level do not seem to be considered. The standing committee recommends that the college improve its communication with community representatives to clarify its course delivery decisions.

The standing committee strongly supports the college's role in delivering such programs in such areas as health, social work, and teacher education. Having Nunavummiut represented in these critical professions ensures the delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the residents of Nunavut.

The committee recognizes that the college's adoption of a ladder approach to program delivery in these and other fields enables more students achieve certifications which can lead to employment opportunities as well as preparing them for future studies to obtain their degree.

The committee looks forward to updates on the number of graduates at each level of each program and members continue to encourage the college to collect and report on information with respect to how many graduates successfully gain employment in their field of study after graduation.

Mr. Chair, that concludes my opening remarks. I am confident that my fellow members will have additional comments and questions.

Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Do members have any general comments before we proceed to detailed questions? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. I just want to highlight a couple of areas which I will like to touch upon today. Last year I did express some concern with the lack of information provided in the college's annual reports. Information used to be provided on number of students participating and number of students graduating across all programs, and over the last number of years I've more importantly expressed my concern over the lack of information on the biggest key performance indicator, post-secondary institutions, and again that is the number of graduates who have found employment in their area of study.

Another area that I would like to touch upon today is the alarming number of vacancies at the professional level in the college, the number of educators that must be vacant, and again the reliance on remote instructions in a number of programs.

Another area I would like to touch upon is the review that was conducted or completed in 2017, the review of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, which did come with a significant number of recommendations. So those are just four areas which I would like to get into today. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Do members have any general comments? Seeing none, we will now proceed to page by page review of the main estimates starting on page M-I-3. Nunavut Arctic College, total operations and maintenance to be voted on \$48,125,000. Mr. Quqgiaq.

Mr. Quqgiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification, before I go on to ask my detailed questions, a letter was dated March 7, 2025 to the chair of the regular members' caucus and I'll go right to my point.

Kitikmeot, one community has an adult educator filled and that's Taloyoak. The following communities do not have adult educators: Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Gjoa Haven, and Kugaaruk. My question is, is Nunavut Arctic College going to fill the positions of the other Kitikmeot communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. In regards to the question about no adult educators in some communities, some of this has to do with a position a coordinator position in the Kitikmeot. That position in the Kitikmeot was vacant for a while, and now we're at a

reference check stage to try to hire a coordinator in the Kitikmeot. That is being worked on now in Kugluktuk. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: To see this letter, it was very disturbing because Kitikmeot is a big region, and to have only one filled position, and that's Taloyoak. I would encourage the Arctic College to have adult educators in the other communities in the Kitikmeot filled as soon as possible.

I go on, Mr. Chairman. One of the challenges faced by the college is in identifying qualified Inuit for instructional and management positions. The question is, Mr. Chairman, to date how many Inuit have been recruited to work at the college? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking that question. It's unfortunate that they've had vacant positions for adult educators in the Kitikmeot and Keewatin and the Baffin region. They have had some HR issues and some adult educator positions don't have adequate housing and that has been a problem.

In regards to your question about hiring Inuit, up to now it's at 43 per cent. It used to be at 37 per cent. Because these positions have not been filled, that's brought the number down. It used to be 61 per cent Inuit employment, and now it's 63 per cent. Thank you, yes, I already said it. It's at 63 per cent Inuit employment, and the number of positions filled was 47 per cent. Now it's 43 per cent before these adult educator jobs are filled. Thank you.

Chairman: There's information pages on M-III-3 and continue on to page M-III-5, just for your information Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the clarification. Government public service statistics from September 2024 show that college staffing is at 44 per cent capacity. The question is, Mr. Chairman, how is the department filling its obligations to deliver programming with such low staffing numbers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. Let me talk about this. In some community learning centres they have an adult educator and they have programs available and there was no interest from the

community. And also I believe my deputy minister, and President Price can fill in the details. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Price.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Chair and thank you to the member for your question. It's good to be here.

The member is correct, the college is experiencing a bottle neck terms of HR. We are working with additional supports and filling key roles within the college's own HR division to address those needs. It is going through the regular competition process, so the timing is not as quick as we would like but we are following the process.

In terms of the capacity, the capacity is across various programs, so we are able to meet our obligations for teaching and providing student support at this time and we do make use of additional HR processes to alleviate that demand, such as CSAs or recess. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many Nunavut Arctic College classes and programs are being delivered remotely, and where are the remote instructors located? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) At this current time there's a couple programs. The PAS program, which is GED program, is delivered on line. The personal support worker program, which is under the Department of Health employees, that is also offered on line. These are the courses that are being offered. That program is being offered for the Department of Health employees. Those are the ones that are on line program at this time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Previous business plan identified the fields of teaching, social services, interpreting, translating, and early childhood education as programs in which to increase the number of Nunavut Inuit in instructor positions. The question is, Mr. Chairman, how many Nunavut Inuit are currently instructing in these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I'll have Ms. Price to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Price, please proceed.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for their question. So the college is always striving to ensure that across the programs there are Inuit in the instructor roles. There are some programs where we are able to solicit interested Inuit to come work with the college. The early childhood education division has been quite successful in engaging with Inuit instructors. The Nunavut Teacher Education Program, as many in the House are aware, has expanded greatly in the last couple of years and those positions have included supports by Inuit elders, instructors, and also facilitators to support communities, support students learning in the community.

Social work is working to strengthen its presence as well with Inuit. We have had Inuit instructors in our delivery in Arviat which has been successful. And I apologize if I've missed any programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business plan notes on page NAC7 that "as the *Inuit Language Protection Act* is managed by Culture and Heritage, the college works closely with the federal government for these projects."

The question is, Mr. Chairman, does this mean that the Department of Culture and Heritage does not provide support for Inuit language-focussed projects? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this program is supported (interpretation ends) under the language implementation funding. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The college received third-party funding for the language revitalization project focussing on Inuinnaqtun. This project has been ongoing for a number of years. The question is, Mr. Chairman, what successes were achieved in 2024-2025, and have any specific initiatives been identified for 2025-2026. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Revitalization program for 2024-2025, the program was not offered for 2024-2025 academic year, and unfortunately there are no current plans for 2025-2026 but this may change depending on the circumstances. So unfortunately that's the information at this time. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many learners are currently enrolled in the interpreter-translator program and at which levels? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To date the people who are taking the program, there are nine in year one interpreter-translator program 2024-2025 year 2 interpreter translator program 2024-2025 academic year. (interpretation) This year there are nine students in year one. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): I'm sorry, I did not finish. Year 2 there was no interpreter translators because there was no one taking that program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since there's only one position filled for Kitikmeot and that's Taloyoak, would it be possible to have the interpreter-translator program in Taloyoak in this upcoming fiscal year or next fiscal year? Is that possible. That's my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question as well. Yes, we can look into it further, see what we can do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: The next name on my list is Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. So I would like to start off addressing some previous topics which I've touched upon so I guess I'll start with the annual report. The last one that was tabled was for 2022-2023 and that was tabled in 2023. Can the minister indicate

when she expects to be able to table the next annual report for the college. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question as well. During the spring session I expect that annual report to be tabled. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Minister. That's great to hear. As I indicated, in the last annual report there was no information on student enrolment. There was some information provided contained in the paragraphs, but the last year that student enrolment was provided was in the fiscal year 2017-2018 annual report, despite the college acquiring a new student information system in 2019 so I suspect the college has that information quite accessible. Will the next annual report include that student enrollment information? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Yes it will. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Minister. That's great. So I guess the next question will be a two-part question. The 2017-2018 annual report indicated that the Nunavut Arctic College had reached its height enrolment with 1,386 students enrolled. A two-part question. As of today, what is the in-total enrolment for the five campuses and 25 community learning centres. Again, what's today's enrolment figure.

And the second part of that question between the five campuses and 25 community learning centres, what is the total enrolment capacity. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question as well. In total of enrolled students there are over 650, around 650, and approximately 700 students, that's 700 students is the capacity in total for the total of CLCs. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. I'll rephrase the question. I want to clarify for the five campuses there's total capacity of 650 and then the 25 community learning centres the capacity is 700? I just want to get that clarification. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. I'll have Ms. Price elaborate further on that. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Price, please proceed.

Ms. Price: Thank you. Just following up on the minister's statement, our student enrollment currently is around the 600 to 650. In terms of capacity across the college, 700 is a fair number. I think it's important to note that there are external limitations to the number of students we can take, most notably student housing. That really limits our ability to accept more students. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Price. So as I had indicated, the college had reached its height student enrolment in 2016, with over 1,300 students enrolled between all the programs. Just out of curiosity, between the five campuses and the 25 community learning centres, what is the total seating space? Like what's the max number of students that can be taught, regardless of the student housing barriers? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question as well. The details of how many, what's the capacity could be, we have not figured out what the detailed capacity would be. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I'll move on now to the NTEP review. There was a significant number of recommendations, 57 recommendations under 13 different topics, and I do recognize that a number of these have been implemented such as the laddering approach and so on.

But I guess the next question I would like to ask, given the significance of the NTEP program and the need for NTEP program to succeed in order to achieve bilingual education in our school systems, has the college been able to accomplish all of the 57 recommendations in the 2017 NTEP review? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you for your question. Inuit language and culture, that has improved a lot, but in total we are unable to complete it but we are proceeding and not everything is completed. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I guess I'll home in on the NTEP instructors and the NTEP program. So one of the issues that was identified in the NTEP review was the three-week program. Sorry, the program focused on three-week modules, I believe is the correct term, which posed a challenge to producing bilingual NTEP graduates as focussing on Inuit language for three weeks at a time of a few times throughout the year was a challenge because we were lacking the Inuktitut continuity through the academic year.

The next question is, is the NTEP still organized into the three-week modules, and if so, has the college been able to address that lack of Inuktitut continuity throughout the academic year. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer this question to our president, Ms. Price.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Price. Please proceed.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Mr. Chair and I thank the member for the question. So through its partnership through Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, and through third-party funding the college has not been able to expand its deliver of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, but significant work went in to restructure the program. So because the program does have ladders, the first two years of the program is structured so that it focuses on Inuit language, culture and world view. That is a marked difference from the previous version of the degree, and through the expanded delivery, the college is able to draw on local experts in the community to either instruct or act as a resource to provide the local Inuit experience, be it dialect or cultural impressions. So that has been a significant change.

Students, after they have successfully complete those two years, then they start the Bachelor of Education portion of their learning, which is largely modular. So there are modules, but we try hard to maintain consistent staff. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Ms. Price. Another issue that was identified in the NTEP review was that of course more communities needed to utilize the community learning centres to expand the NTEP offerings. But one issue that was identified was the fact that the program can only be started every four years. So a high school grad that didn't graduate whether the NTEP program was being offered would have to wait up to four years to be able to enroll. Has the college been able to determine a means to address that? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. (no interpretation) (interpretation ends) So Iqaluit could off all years, and we have students transferred to Iqaluit as well when that case happens. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. That's great to hear. Another topic that the NTEP review identified was the NTEP instructors are typically hired on one-year contracts, and it indicated that they may not be committed to the program or having new instructors would lack continuity in the program delivery.

Is the college still operating on hiring NTEP instructors on one-year contracts? Or what is the average time frame or life of an NTEP instructor? Do they stay around more than one year or do they tend to stay five years? Or do you have a lot of NTEP instructors? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik,* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The instructors are on a contract basis. (interpretation ends) We don't have that level of detail in terms of the numbers. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I feel happy about the dialogue that we're having, and I appreciate all of your responses.

Now I would like to home in on the topic of driver's education. A lot of careers in Nunavut require a driver's licence, whether it's class 5 or class so on. So that was one concern that I raised, was so many households in Nunavut do not own vehicles so our

youth don't have the opportunity to learn how to drive, which is why I think it's important to offer driver's education.

I know that a few communities do offer driver's education programs. Has the college gone into discussions with these local organizations that offer driver's ed? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that question. In regards to driver's instruction, in Rankin Inlet we have been having dialogue about welfare recipients that can take training courses, driving courses, and we've started talking about that, to have our short modules specifically for welfare recipients through the health program for upgrading for courses that are set at a multi-year level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I'll pick up on that another time. I want to pick up on one last topic. A number of years ago I had found out that resume writing and interview prep was removed from course outlines in specific programs, especially office-related programs I expressed my concern over the years and I believe last year the minister indicated the college campuses now offer student support services which includes resume writing.

Would the minister be able to update the House how many students actually utilize this resume writing, which is of course is going to be an essential part of gaining future employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Thank you and thank you for that question. We have student services that can provide that, and then there's the admin and college foundation and that includes resume writing in the classroom. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister, and to your officials. I would like to touch on Nunavut Arctic College offering an early learning education program, specifically hopefully, in Baker Lake. I did bring this up when we had the Department of Education in Committee of the Whole.

Currently our day care in Baker Lake has enough room for four infants, 23 school children, for a total of 24 and they have eight full-time staff.

The day care has been doing a lot of tremendous work in trying to get a new day care built in Baker Lake. They have secured quite a bit of funding, and they are anticipating to open it in the fall of 2026, so just a little over a year from now.

When the new facility opens they will have space for 12 infants, 12 toddlers, and 32 pre-schoolers, 56 in total and potential to employ at least 14 full-time staff. But in order to accomplish that they need early learning education program to educate and train the staff that could be working there.

They have also reached out to, the new day care will have space available for practicum requirements of students, participants in the early learning child program, so that they will receive experience, training, and knowledge required for completion of the program. They have also reached out to several day cares in other communities within to Kivalliq to ascertain interest of other potential students, and in addition to many individuals from Baker Lake who want to register in the early learning child program at least 15 individuals have indicated they would be interested in moving to and enrolling in the program, should it be held in Baker Lake.

My question is to the minister what would it take for Nunavut Arctic College to offer such a program in Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that question. We would like to see that course being offered in Baker Lake and in other communities, but the only problem is it doesn't have third party funding. If there was, then we could offer those courses, that course, or other programs that could be made available in the other communities. So our problem is that we don't get third-party funding for this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood the minister correctly, the issue would be that they do not receive third-party funding, that the college would need third-party funding to offer this course. She is nodding yes, Mr. Chairman.

I'll ask my next question, then. Would the college be able to source out and secure third-party funding to run this program in Baker Lake as it's shown by this letter from the day care that this program is needed. We all know every community has a growing population, very young population, so we have to prepare and meet the needs of these growing children that are coming up. What more could the college do to help secure

third-party funding? Do they know how to source it or how to go about it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer this question to our president, Ms. Price, if that's okay with you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Price.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the member for your question. Thank you for this information. We will definitely make sure it's shared with the team at the college that focuses on early childhood education. As the minister stated, community delivery of this program would require third-party funding. The college has been able to offer this in other communities through funding, say through the regional Inuit organizations. This is something that, and I believe it requires support from the local district education authorities, so it is within the realm of possibility, and having a community that is proactive really helps the process. With the minister's support, of course, we will bring forward this recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the responses. I look forward to a nice collaboration between Arctic College and the Department of Education in trying to get this program started in Baker Lake. My next lines of questioning is around pre-trades and trades training. There are opportunities or avenues where trades training could be done outside of regional hubs through partnerships with the private sector. One good example would be class 3 or class 1 air brakes driver's programs.

What more could the college do to ensure this happens so that we have more Nunavummiut working in the trades? Being from Baker Lake and Agnico Eagle Mines going since 2008, I still see a lot of non-Nunavummiut coming up to work even just driving tractor trailers. So there's not enough being done regarding trades training. I wonder what more could the college do to do trades training in Baker Lake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) I guess one of the reasons is the trades chair or the chair for industry trades position needs to be filled first, and then that could certainly help with putting out more programs in that area, especially anywhere. The position at this time is fourth a competition so hopefully after that position is filled we can look further in more training opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you Minister for the response. My last question, last suggestion again with the college could do is culinary arts. That's needed at the mine site. That's needed in the restaurants. There are two in Baker Lake that are still flying people in to work in the kitchens.

We do have an old facility, the former Igloo Hotel. It's shut down now, but it could be repurposed for a kitchen training centre. Would the minister be willing to commit to looking into offering a culinary arts course in Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your question. We do have a very good success rate with the culinary arts program in Cambridge Bay, and the instructor does have red seal certificate for that. There's a number of things that the department or the college would have to consider, a proper kitchen to give that program, and also ensuring that the instructor does have a red seal certificate to give that kind of program. But those are some things we have to keep in mind if we were to run a culinary arts program anywhere. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. My last question to ask would be would the minister commit to visiting Baker Lake with her college staff to see the community, see the infrastructure there and the possibilities that we could be done in Baker Lake with regards to other trades training or college programs, because I do know there's one classroom in the community learning centre that sits empty. It's very unutilized. I'm looking for a commitment for the minister to do a site visit to Baker Lake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your offer to visit Baker Lake. It's something we can look further into. (interpretation ends) *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Next name on my list is Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister, and officials. I would like to revisit the eligibility criteria of the bachelor of science in nursing, the Arctic nursing

program. As the minister is very well aware, I brought this up last year, in the requirements on the Nunavut Arctic College's website, it says academic requirements are grade 12 diploma with at least 70 per cent overall, including a grade 12 math, English, and science. I will note that the minister or her officials, I doubt if the minister herself was the one who put it on the website, but it does have an asterisk at the bottom of the introduction of this program that says that the program requires an understanding of academic math, which can differ from the general math taught in courses rated below 30-1 threshold. So it suggests that if you do not have 70 per cent in a math 30-1, it's recommended that you take a pre-health program.

My first question, Mr. Chairman, I guess two questions. I'll make it a two-part. One, why wasn't the criteria updated in the actual program outline; and two, why wasn't the science and English 30-1 threshold mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for raising this. The program outline on the website is being reviewed, and a new program outline will be identified (interpretation ends) I don't know if I stated that right, but if you don't mind the president responding a bit more in detail. *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Ms. Price, please proceed.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for his question. As the member is correct the college in the conversations that the MLA had with the minister at the time, the college did look to update its requirements for science. The math and English were not considered at that time, and we will take this note and go back to the college and work with the program specifically to see if the same requirements are required for that program.

The college is very proud of its pre-health program and encourages many students to apply to that to ensure that they have the strong skills to succeed in the four-year degree program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the officials for the response. However, I'm sure the minister was listening very closely whether we had the Minister of Education's appearance last week on how important school guidance counsellors could be in directing students to make sure they meet the academic requirements in the courses they study. Although I'm sure the pre-health program is very good, there are students that have worked very hard to make sure that they meet the eligibility requirements right out of high school.

I just can't emphasize enough. It may seem petty, but the way it's written right now, if I was a school guidance counsellor and I was looking at the course requirements, I wouldn't be necessarily directing the student to take 30-1 programming because it's not outlined in there.

If you look at the partner university's criteria for the same program, they have a 75 per cent minimum requirement and they specifically say academic grade 12 math, science and English.

I'll leave it as a comment. The minister is upgrading the program outline, and I look forward to that being completed. I just really think it is important to make sure we're setting our students up. It's just disappointing when a student is interested in a career path and all of a sudden they find they don't meet the requirements, and that could be a diversion point. So I just don't want to have any road blocks where they are unnecessary in somebody pursuing their academic goals and interests. I'll leave that as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Do you want to comment on the comment, Minister Nakashuk?

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for raising this. You're correct, we don't want any obstacles for our students and we want to have more clear language what students should expect and what academics they should possess. (interpretation ends) We will certainly take this into discussion as we need to ensure that we are clear on what we promote. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Joe Savikataaq): I have no more names on my list. Sorry about that, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The environmental technology program is currently offered as a diploma program based in Iqaluit. What options are being considered to deliver this program in other communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for raising this. You're correct, if everyone wants to take this course you are able to, and we are going to provide this. If you want to take this program you have to be prepared. You need to consider what needs to be available in a community, and putting aside or saving money and for putting aside funds for instructors that will be required, which is one of the critical areas. This is one of the most popular programs in the communities. I may have skipped some but these are some of the things that would have to be well prepared in communities.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for clarifying that. (interpretation ends) previous business plan indicates that Arctic net has funding available for northern post-secondary institutions and the Nunavut Research Institute hopes to access multi-year funding. What specific activities will be supported by the funding, if the proposal is accepted? *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki) (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for raising this. The students that attended the program went very well, but at this time we will have to put funds aside if we're going to proceed with such programs thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thankyou. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister. (interpretation ends) The business plan indicates on page 15 that the college has been working on a research strategy framework. What are the components of this framework and how will it support Nunavut-based research? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your question. The details in environment technology have in any college and research what research can take place. There are a number of options that are considered here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Minister. Perhaps if you approve for funding, perhaps the programs would be prepared for smaller communities if at all possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your question. It would be very great to see this program, to have it available in a community. Sometimes we provide online programming. That can also be considered as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister. And just to mention, Igloolik has a research centre. Perhaps this could be made available there. If you're going to consider where, this is one consideration to think about. My question is the Nunavut Research Institute (interpretation ends) Detection program was very active in 2024-2025. Is the research institute considering any additional options to detect and annualize other wildlife contaminants that are found in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. This can be looked at some more because it's necessary to have a proper lab and we would need scientists to work in the lab. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister. (interpretation ends) Business plan indicates on page 16 that the research institute is looking to transfer the responsibility for research licensing to another agency of department. Why is this a priority for the college? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question, Ms. Quassa. Whenever there is a research proposal, they give it to our office. Arctic college wants to be able to do their own research and we want to have another department or division take over that responsibility. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister. (interpretation ends) One of the research institute's priorities for 2024-2025 was to finalize a research associates and affiliates program. The business plan indicates on page 16 that the first research associate was hired under this program in September 2023. Is this associate a Nunavut Inuk? And in which community are they based? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking that question. That person is not an Inuk and the person works in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister, and your officials. I would like to start off by my colleague from Aggu asking about the environmental technology course. (interpretation) Looking at your business plan, about the environmental technology program, and you want a budget for the Baffin of \$24,700,000 can you look into this matter, Minister, at the environmental technology course is one of the most popular courses. What about in my constituency of Igloolik and Hall Beach? Perhaps they can start with like a remote learning to see if that can work in Hall Beach or Igloolik. Can this be looked into, to start off something in my constituency. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking that question. We would need to do some serious considerations about that because they would need to get hunting equipment for the environmental technology program. I believe that's what the member is talking about. There would need to be a study done on it in community to look into the requests for an environmental tech program in Sanirajak. There would need to be a plan made and they need to make applications for the hunting equipment. It would be hard to do online. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let's not look for barriers. There are conservation officers working in the communities. They are under the Department of Environment. Can't we look into their equipment? Like it sounded really hard when you were talking about it; they would have to get hunting equipment that they need to get. Can this be looked at further with Nunavut Arctic College and Department of Environment? If they wanted to do like a remote program, because environmental programs are very important. I believe this could be looked at.

I'll stop there for now and move on to something else. In your business plan about the student supports, although it states that in the regions for the adult educator support workers for adult learners, is there a job open in Igloolik or Hall Beach about what I'm talking about? The reason why I'm talking about this is we get touched mentally people. Have a hard time with mental health and that's why I'm asking the question. Is there a job like that in my two constituency's communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking the question. Now NTEP instructors, they have elder, they include elders and there are eight of them right now. And whenever a community requests for an elder, an elder can be hired temporarily as a support worker or as a teacher at the college, at the community learning centre. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's really good to hear. Thank you, Minister. So hiring Inuit while we're the government is what we plan to do under the Katujjiluta mandate that's why I brought this up.

My question was how can we create more jobs for the Inuit, because they hardly have ever have any jobs from the government.

I would like to go back to this about the research institute. Now, animals like walrus, when they start to have diseases or parasites, apparently there are 13 walrus that were tested and they had positive trichinosis. Now, in Igloodik there is a research station. Can the college look into this to have Inuit work as lab technicians for our animals? Can this be started to be taught in our community? Apparently there's somebody already working at the lab and they were able to study and find positive 13 walruses. That's what I'm talking about. I believe a job could be created there for Inuit. I'll stop here for now. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking the question. We generally use third-party funding for that. And the lab coordinator will need to be created. Though we have started working on that, because we receive funding to the end of March from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Joellie, are you done? Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation ends) First I just want to say it's good to see some programs happening in Kugluktuk, there is computer programming, et cetera over there. But I saw the little problem there that there's hardly anybody taking them. Normally there is, but I know there's a few and my daughter's one of them.

I'm just wondering if there was any funding going towards the students or maybe to the day cares that's available there, too. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. In community learning centres the programs for one- or two-year programs, they generally go through FANS. If it's for less than a year, if they are going to have a year for less than a year they get funding from family services and they also have day care support available and Nunavut Arctic College does not handle those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the response. (interpretation ends) In the past I have touched upon revitalization of Inuinnaqtun. I was wondering if there's going to be any plans for this year or maybe next year for some programs happening towards our revitalizing Inuinnaqtun. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for asking that question. It was asked earlier. In 2024-2025 they didn't get a chance to gather students, so we won't be able to hold that program in 2025-2026, unless something changes. If we can find teachers, we would like the program to go ahead. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: I looked into that where the teachers can come in. I talked to a couple people, and one of them is very fluent with the new rating, the Q and Rs, and other one is more like the older fashion of writing Inuinnaqtun. They were willing to teach, so I think that part is taken care of.

I just want to go to program portfolios on our regional campuses, preferably the one in Cambridge Bay, I guess that's Kitikmeot. Are there any plans to have Inuinnaqtun revitalization there too? Like those other programs, like trades skills, professional career, development, upgrading, adult education? Are there going to be any programs on Inuinnaqtun revitalization also? Quana.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. Inuinnaqtun instructors, if you know anyone who can instruct, we are very interested in hearing, because we need to get an Inuinnaqtun instructor. But we have not any plan for Cambridge Bay for NTEP. They are using that as NTEP and social work but I'm not saying that it's close for other programs, but that's how it is set up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Chair. The Arctic College funding for Inuit language and culture programs is projected to increase slightly in 2025-2026. Will any new programming be offered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) We are looking to expand the delivery of that so we're really hoping that we are able to expand a bit more in that area. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Chair. The college received third party funding for language revitalization project focussing on Inuinnaqtun. This project has been ongoing for a number of years. What successes were achieved in 2024-2025, and have any specific initiatives been identified for 2025-2026? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question as well, although this was asked earlier. This program did not go ahead in 2024-2025 because there were no instructors. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: I just want to go to interpreter-translators. There are not many translators are left also in Kugluktuk, but this will be my last question. How many learners are currently enrolled in the interpreter-translator program and at which levels? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your question. There are nine students for year one for interpreter-translator for 2024-2025 in Iqaluit thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Mr. Anavilok, are you finished?

Mr. Anavilok: Are any Inuinnaqtun programs happening here? That would be my last question. Quana.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the member's question. This program is not being taught in Iqaluit. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Mr. Anavilok are you finished? I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Nunavut Arctic College, total operations and maintenance to be voted on, \$48,125,000. Agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: I'm going to recognize the clock. We're going to have 30 minutes' break. Minister Nakashuk, brief closing comments. (interpretation) I apologize for rushing too much.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the members for approving the Nunavut Arctic College main estimates, and for approving our main estimates and also although this was not asked, but I do want to say that in Rankin Inlet programs level 4 and 5 will start and because we see many people who go to Alberta to further their education, but this program will be done in Nunavut, but not going outside of Nunavut.

I'm very pleased that you're able to approve the main estimates and I thank our planners who work in adult education centres and all the members for your good questions. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out. Before we go to the next department, we'll have 30 minutes' break.

>>*Committee recessed from 17:45 to 18:20*

Chairman: I would like to call this committee to order. I would like to ask Minister Gross, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Quana, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do. Quana.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in.

For the record, Minister Gross, please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good evening, everyone. With me this evening to my left, to your right, we have Alma Power, the Deputy Minister of Human Resources. And to my right, to your left, we have Peter Chakonza, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Strategic Management and our Director of Policy and Planning and Communications. Also with us in the House we have Regulie Adla (ph), the Director of Corporate Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to present the 2025-2026 Main Estimates and the 2025-2026 Business Plan for the Department of Human Resources.

As the Government of Nunavut's primary advisor on human resources, we manage the public service and support departments and public bodies in many areas, such as policy, staffing, training and development, employee relations, health and safety, and wellness. We also lead Inuit pre-employment training strategies and programs.

For 2025-2026, our allocation for operations and maintenance is \$30.1 million, an increase of \$781,000, approximately 2.65 percent from the previous year. This reflects the Government of Nunavut's salary increase that took effect in October 2024.

The major components of our budget include:

- \$18.4 million for compensation and benefits;
- \$7.8 million for service contracts; and
- \$2.1 million for purchased services.

Mr. Chair, in the coming 2025-2026 fiscal year, we will direct our efforts toward increasing Inuit employment through the 2024-2034 Master Inuit Employment Plan and departmental Inuit Employment Plans and initiatives. This plan presents a great opportunity for the government to move forward on increasing Inuit employment over the coming years.

The Department of Human Resources will continue to lead the development of a framework for the Inuit Pre-employment Training Strategy in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Canada. We will also finalize the government's new Human Resource Strategy before moving into implementation.

Mr. Chair, this fiscal year the Department of Human Resources will introduce the first phase of Fusion Cloud software to streamline recruitment, leave, and attendance, and learning and development processes. Additionally, we will pilot our new Onboarding Program to help departments welcome and orient new employees, ultimately improving engagement and retention efforts.

The Department of Human Resources will continue to encourage and support departments to prioritize and utilize the following three policies in implementation: Nunavut-Wide Hiring Policy, aimed at building capacity, promoting Inuit employment and supporting decentralization; Remote Hiring, an interim measure for filling specialized and hard-to-fill positions; and Telework Policy, which improves attraction and retention by offering flexible work arrangements.

Our department will continue collaborating with the Nunavut Housing Corporation on strategies to improve the delivery of staff housing, a much-needed resource for attracting and retaining employees to our public service.

The Department of Human Resources will continue our renewed efforts to honour recipients of the Long-Term Service Awards by hosting multiple events over the next year. It is important that we honour our public servants for their dedication and the services they provide to Nunavummiut.

At the same time, we will maintain our negotiations with the Nunavut Employees Union, aiming to reach an agreement as soon as possible. We are in the initial stages of preparations for new collective agreements with the Nunavut Teachers Association and with the Qulliq Energy Corporation Nunavut Employees Union.

Mr. Chair, our department remains committed to providing leadership and working collaboratively with other departments and public bodies to advance our Katujjiluta mandate priorities and key human resource goals.

I welcome questions and comments from Committee members. Quana, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on

its review of the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Human Resources.

The department's proposed 2025-2026 operations and maintenance budget is \$30,172,000. This represents a 2.7 per cent increase from the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, the number of positions in the department remains unchanged at 133 PYs.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

The 2021-2022 Public Service annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 9, 2023. Members continue to look forward to the timely tabling of the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 annual reports.

Ministerial Mandate Letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Human Resources' Mandate Letter indicated that one of the department's priorities has been to "develop options for a new flexible workplace policy to support decentralization efforts and offer employees more flexibility to work from any Government of Nunavut office in the territory."

The standing committee notes that the government's new Nunavut-Wide Hiring Policy, Out-of-Territory Remote Hiring Policy and Telework Policy are now in effect. The standing committee encourages the minister to ensure that future annual reports under the *Public Service Act* contain comprehensive information on the administration of these policies.

Ministerial Mandate Letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Human Resources' Mandate Letter indicates that one of the department's priorities has been to "support the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to review the current status of decentralization and to identify opportunities for further decentralization."

The Decentralization Review report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2024. One of the recommendations contained in the Decentralization Review report is to "continue to consider the need for any dysfunctional headquarters offices to be moved from a community to Iqaluit or a regional centre."

The draft 2025-2026 business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs indicates that it is "working with the Department of Human Resources to develop a Government of Nunavut response to the recommendations."

The Government of Nunavut's current Staff Housing Policy was approved in April 2019. It falls under the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources. The Minister of Human Resources' Mandate Letter also indicates that one of the department's priorities has been to "review and improve the delivery of Government of Nunavut staff housing with support of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, including reviewing Staff Housing Allocation Committee functionality, reviewing and revising the staff housing policy and allocation procedure, and developing a long-term plan with short-term goals."

Another stated priority in the Mandate Letter is to "work collaboratively with Nunavut Housing Corporation and Finance to review and modify staff housing policy and subsidies to encourage employees to move from Government of Nunavut staff housing into affordable rental units or homes of their own." The department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that "updates to the Staff Housing Policy are anticipated to be completed by the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year."

Mr. Chairman and Members, the Department of Human Resources has responsibilities in respect to establishing the government's overall Inuit employment targets. It is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made to date in increasing Inuit employment in the Government of Nunavut. Information that is contained in the government's quarterly employment reports indicates that a total of 1,213 Nunavut Inuit were employed by the government as of September 30, 2004. By September of 2024, that number had increased to 1,890. This represents an increase of approximately 55 per cent over the 20-year period.

It is important for the government to develop realistic timetables for achieving full representativeness across all occupational categories in the government. This is a significant challenge. The government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that as of September 30, 2024, the Government of Nunavut had a total of 5,653 positions, of which 1,890 were filled by Nunavut Inuit. 1,700 positions were filled by non-Nunavut Inuit employees and 2,062 positions were currently vacant.

In order for the government to achieve an 85 per cent Inuit workforce for a fully staffed organization, it needs to hire approximately 2,914 new Nunavut Inuit employees, and not lose a single one of its current Nunavut Inuit employees.

The department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it "led and coordinated the renewal of the Government of Nunavut-wide Master Inuit Employment Plan and the departmental Inuit Employment Plans, reflecting negotiated terms and priorities from the 2024-2034 Nunavut Agreement Implementation Contract."

Mr. Chairman and Members, it also indicates that one of its priorities for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is to "continue to focus government-wide attention on ways to increase Inuit employment in the Government of Nunavut through the 2024-2034 Master Inuit Employment Plan and detailed departmental Inuit Employment Plans and initiatives."

It also indicates that one of its priorities for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is to “finalize the 2024-2034 Master Inuit Employment Plan and detailed departmental Inuit Employment Plans and initiatives in collaboration with all departments.”

The standing committee looks forward to the timely tabling of these plans, in addition to the government’s updated Human Resource Strategy, which the department’s business plan indicates is “anticipated to be completed by the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.”

The department’s 2023-2026 business plan indicated that the budget for the Summer Student Employment Equity Program would be increasing from \$985,000 in the 2022-2023 fiscal year to \$2,590,000 in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. This represented an increase of 162.9 per cent. The budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year remains unchanged.

The standing committee strongly supports the government’s program, which provides valuable work experience for Nunavut youth. The standing committee notes that the department’s draft 2024-2026 business plan indicated that it was “working on developing the year-round Student Employment Program and program design will be completed by end of this fiscal year.” The standing committee strongly supports the expansion of this program to all communities in the territory.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Human Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Do members have any general comments before we proceed to detailed questions? Seeing none, we will now proceed to page by page review of the main estimates, starting at page D4. Human resources operations, total operations and maintenance, \$19,449,000. Questions? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that has been a concern over a number of years is not just the vacancies across the entire civil service, but specifically with the Department of Human Resources itself. I’ve often said in this House and outside this House that we need to fully staff the Human Resources department before we can fully expect them to fulfil their obligations as a central agency to the Government of Nunavut.

Can the Minister give me an indication of how staffing levels at the Department of Human Resources are doing; are they improving or maintaining the same or getting worse? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you to the member for that question. The Department of Human Resources is at 60 per cent capacity and we have

improved slightly. We are a small department and every position and employee are very important. Out of our 117 positions, 70 are filled and 47 are vacant. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. I encourage the minister to work with her cabinet colleagues to prioritize hiring practices for the Department of Human Resources itself so it can fulfill its continuing obligations.

During the standing committee appearance the minister made reference at one point to streamlining some of the hiring policies. Can the minister highlight some of the most significant changes being considered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you to the member for the question. So our ERP policy changes, that's the biggest change that will allow for more flexible work to help fill underfilled positions, and working on that policy will help the department significantly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As referenced in the opening comments, one of the things that has been under review for quite an extensive period of time is the staff housing policy review. I know it has been brought up a couple of times in the House, including by myself. There have been some announcements over the last couple of years, but one of the most concerning ones to me other than the delay in getting an overarching policy updated, and it has been raised in the House again a few times of Government of Nunavut Nunavut employee retirements and the impact it has on their housing situation.

I would be curious to know some of the ideas or what some of the suggestions that are being put forward. How do I put this; this has a significant life impacting decision on many, many people across the territory, whether it be delaying their retirement, staying employed longer than planned, just the challenges of trying to find accommodations after retiring, when, as the minister very well knows, when you're on a public housing waiting list and you're currently adequately housed, your application is at the bottom of the pile. So I think this is a very important initiative that needs to be focused on.

So a two-part question. One, when is the staff housing policy review going to be completed and when can we expect to see some of the outcomes of that, and, like I had mentioned, some specific work going on with our retiring Government of Nunavut employees with their housing situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for those great questions. We do want to have our employees, if they are going to be retiring, know that they will be able to transition into a public housing unit, and we're working with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to have hopefully something finalized in next couple months. So hopefully by our next session we'll have something ready for the committee to see.

As far as a policy, we want to have that finalized by September 2025. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Next person on my list is Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two questions here. It's about decentralization. Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities is to "support the department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to review the current status of decentralization and to identify opportunities for further decentralization."

The decentralization review report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2024. The draft 2025-2026 business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs indicates that it is working with the Department of Human Resources to develop our Government of Nunavut response to the recommendations.

The question is, Mr. Chairman, when will the response be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. It will be tabled tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* I believe it was tabled today. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have to ask. I'll be looking forward to the tabling of the documents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): *Qujannamiik.* Thank you I have no more names on the list. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome, Minister Gross and your team. Just a quick follow-up to Mr. Hickey's question about employees and housing. I know I've asked in the past and maybe there's a new answer. Minister Gross are you tracking how many current employees are homeless or near homeless? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's information that we don't track unless somebody lets us know that that's a situation that they may be in, and that's how we know. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, that kind of confounds me, because we are reviewing staff housing policy and I feel like that's a question that's really important. I know from experience managing teams, getting ahead of an employee's crisis is part of being a good manager. Ensuring that they have a safe place to go to after work so that they're ready to come to work and be really productive employees.

I'm also very concerned about the number of employees who have children who have precarious housing. I have asked in the past as well whether or not that's being tracked. And I would like to hear from you, Minister Gross: Why isn't that a consideration of the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hon. Pamela Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. If somebody is unfortunately going through a crisis and may not be housed, it is information that we don't know about until they share that, as it relates to privacy. And they are the ones that have to share that information with us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a question that could be posed in a way that doesn't single anybody out. You know, we see the Government of Nunavut putting out employee surveys on a regular basis that employees can respond to anonymously. I would like to know, Minister Gross, is the Department of Human Resources willing to look at this very important issue and put an employee survey out, to ask employees about whether or not they're homeless, near homeless, or in otherwise precarious housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for asking that question. The Department of Human Resources can definitely work with the Department of Family Services and with the Nunavut Housing Corporation on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. I appreciate that and I think it will go quite far in informing policy and the way forward when it comes to staff housing.

In the discussion about the transition to housing for retiring employees, you know, I think it's vitally important that the Government of Nunavut take a long-term approach to this, and be more creative in moving employees out of staff housing and into their own housing. So if the minister could talk about how the plans are going forward so that in the long term that we are not having retirees facing homelessness or having to live, move to public housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. We will have more options coming forward for staff housing for retirees, coming forward working with Nunavut 3000. I would just like to ask our deputy minister to elaborate because she's working closely with this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Power. Please proceed.

Ms. Power: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question. It's always an interesting interest about housing. Through Nunavut 3000 we will be in the Government of Nunavut expanding housing options and continuum of housing and the different options that are available to people. Currently there's some difficulty just around inventory, the number of houses, units, just the inventory and the number of houses that are available. So it's difficult to incentivize people from staff housing out into another option, when there aren't any options available. So we do hope over the next couple of years through Nunavut 3000 with some building of staff housing and some leasing of new staff housing units there will be more flexibility in the system. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that response. I do look forward to a time where there is more flexibility and more resources and opportunities given to employees when it comes to long-term housing.

I would like to talk a little bit about employee safety and wellness and it's in the same vein as my concerns about tracking employees who are homeless or near homeless, as well as specifically as well as their children as well.

I know that it is a very difficult to engage employees about their personal lives, and especially if they are particularly at risk to violence or to addictions. However, I think it's vitally important to be able to ensure that employees know that they can approach their employers when their personal safety is at risk. And that has an impact on housing as well, right? If somebody's in a relationship where they're not safe and they have to suddenly move to be in a safer space, they need to be able to know that they are able to engage the employer.

I would like to hear about what specific programs are in place, and that includes not just getting time off for moves or time off for incidents of violence in their lives, but also training for management to be able to have those conversations and recognize when somebody is at risk and take steps to address those situations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. So I believe that this does happen every day where employees reach out to their manager to support to help through whatever crisis may be happening. We do also have mental health supports that are provided to our employees, and we have initiatives and programs that are in place for employees to partake in.

We offer access to counselling services for employees dealing with stress, anxiety, or other mental-health issues. We also have the employee and family assistance program, which is inclusive and confidential service with resources for personal and work-related issues that is available to all Government of Nunavut employees and their family members.

Through that employee and family assistance program and Canada Life, there are also self-directed resources for life issues for a work-life balance, coaching, financial planning and legal consultation. The employee and family assistance program is offered 24 hours a day in multiple languages, including Inuktitut, and if there are other requirements that need to be made, Government of Nunavut employees can request access to the service by calling 1-800-663-1142.

A couple last points. We also have with that service on-site grief and trauma counselling services, which can be requested to deal with any traumatic events in a workplace community. We also have through our Canada Life benefits \$2,000 that can be combined for psychologist, physio, psychotherapy and social workers.

And lastly, Mr. Chair, the Department of Human Resources also has a number of videos to assist with workplace and health and well-being. I believe that answered your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you Minister. I appreciate that very thorough response. Is the Department of Human Resources capturing any information or data on employees who may be at risk in this area? If so, how? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we don't. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Again, I feel that it is vitally important to have a snapshot of that reality, especially given what we know about the levels of violence in Nunavut, especially the level of violence towards Inuit women. I think it's a very important area of concern. I believe that the Inuit employment stats, but I can't remember the numbers, there are more Inuit women employed than Inuit men, so would it be possible to also do an anonymous employee survey on this issue as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it's something we can look into. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate that commitment. When we could do that work it's really important to take that information and do something with it, so once that work is done, hopefully I'll still be here and you can push for some action that's evidence-based.

I'll move on and just ask one of the recommendations contained in decentralization review report is to continue to consider the need for any dysfunctional headquarters offices to be moved from a community to Iqaluit or a regional centre. Which specific offices are being actively considered for relocation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. We recently moved the statistics bureau from Pangnirtung to Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, how many other dysfunctional headquarters offices are there currently in the Government of Nunavut? And what is the plan to address that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We continue to look at jobs in the community and see what aligns, to see if there's anything that can be done to support any vacancies. I know that working to fill hard-to-fill positions or positions that might have been vacant for a long time is an area that some departments are looking at. We have wildlife biologists that are going to be moved to Cambridge Bay from Igloolik, as those positions have been vacant for quite some time. Moving them to Cambridge Bay I think will support positions to be filled.

Opportunities like that that are out there, working to see if there are other positions out there that might be better suited in another community for opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, you mentioned those wildlife positions related to being vacant for some time. What's the threshold for the term of vacancy that will cause an action like moving it to a different community? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think there is a time frame per se, but there have been a number of competitions that were run unsuccessful and it's just working to improve the workforce and have better alignment with the job and the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Are there a specific group of metrics that the Department of Human Resources is using to look at these vacancies in order to make the decision? Is there a policy? Is there a discussion paper? How is that being decided or is it just helter-skelter, one-off? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Most community positions are with Justice, Health and Education, and they can't be moved. However, sometimes there are other positions that are with other departments that could possibly be moved, and maybe if you'll allow my deputy minister to further elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Power, please proceed.

Ms. Power: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. As the minister said, we do try and make sure that the positions at the community level especially are aligned with the workforce in the community. We have looked at NILFA. There's a new NILFA, labour force analysis coming out in the next year or two that will also help inform as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that. It just struck me that I didn't ask about how successful the move of the bureau of statistics has actually been. How many positions are there and is it fully staffed? I feel like I did ask that of the premier, I did ask, but can you please remind me. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have that information in front of me but I know that there are some positions that are filled. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Premier Akeegok, do you want to complement that question?

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me just pull it up here. I do have the numbers and I know it was of interest at standing committee. It has been successful in terms of securing the director. Just give me a second here. Let me just pull it up.

I was anticipating that question when I'm just appearing I think two departments ahead so just bear with me here. There we go. Staffing.

So the bureau currently has three active personnel out of six established positions. First, the director which is based in Iqaluit, and the project manager senior analyst right now we have that filled as a casual. One information analysis officer, which is still based in Pangnirtung which we're very fortunate to keep that. So those are the three that we currently have. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that response, Premier. I appreciate it. I suppose I'll leave off by making a comment because I know that my time is running out.

I think it's really important to have an ongoing review of actions like this moving an entire office into another community, to address these staffing issues, and to ensure that any lessons learned or barriers that are faced are informing next steps when it comes to considering moving a dysfunctional headquarter office to a new location. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the member for that comment. It's noted. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik* (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. Anybody else have a question? Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have the one question. Kugluktuk is getting 12 new units and five are government housing. Are those going to create government job positions or are people just going to move into them from old units? Thank you, Chair. That's my final question.

Chairman (Mr. Joe Savikataaq): *Mat'na*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. That's something we'll have to discuss with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and get back to the member on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Savikataaq: *Mat'na*. I have no more names on my list. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) The non-decentralized communities according to the HR policy when a job or position is removed from a community do they replace that with a similar job? Or is that not being used? Thank you.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, usually that's the case. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na*. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The positions that were moved out of Pangnirtung, so which department is or which positions are replacing those positions?

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't recall at the moment but we'll get back to the member on that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Let me move on to something else. There is a Nunavut-wide policy that is being used. So how many communities have those kind of positions? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. The communities, sorry one minute. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The communities are Igloodik, Arviat, and Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I always ask this question to the minister and the premier. The smaller communities have been left behind when it comes to decentralization. I would really like them to benefit, too, but there doesn't seem to be much drive for the government to do more for them. I can really see how the government is not working as hard for the smaller communities. I can see that because I represent a smaller community. I wonder when the smaller communities will start to get some job positions. Thank you.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. This Nunavut-wide hiring policy is a meaningful step in supporting decentralization, and it's a very new policy, so we don't have very many positions that are under the policy right now. However, depending on the department, they can put the position out for Nunavut-wide work and fill from anywhere in the territory. So we ask that departments do that if they want to open up their pool of candidates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Does the minister understand that the smaller communities will not be using that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the member can please elaborate on the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): According to this is how I understand Ministers response that the remote policy is only going to be used for the decentralized communities. Is that how it is?

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, not necessarily. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Just so that the people in Nunavut (interpretation ends) Can the minister elaborate on that and explain it clearly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the member for that question. So the Nunavut-wide hiring policy strengthens and supports the Nunavut public service and contributes to decentralization. That is one of the key areas of what this policy is intended to do. The policy provides all Government of Nunavut departments with a new competitive hiring option that allows them to advertise positions where Government of Nunavut office space is available.

As this is new and we're in the early phases of this policy, we do need office space in the community and that's something that is being developed, getting inventory on what office space is available. I think it's a great policy for people to be employed in their home communities, in their home towns. We have a lot of people going to post-secondary and maybe able to support their position that might not have been in their community before, and be able to work from home through this policy that's out there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* But just to confirm, currently right now, there are no territorial-wide workers in non-decentralized communities? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's correct, but hopefully in the future we can have more decentralized communities, non-decentralized communities within the Nunavut-wide hiring policy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) How often does the job ads goes, as new employment is not very often, because reading, when you guys were reading your opening comments, there was no change to 133 PYs in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. Those positions are not our positions. However, we did hire one position from within our department in Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: To my understanding there's not going to be very many jobs that are being under this new Nunavut-wide policy. Am I correct? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. Once we have the inventory of office space then we'll be able to better position ourselves and know what communities have what office space available and that will help support the Nunavut-wide hiring policy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When is the timeline to have the inventory done for these office spaces? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the member for that question. That's with the Department of Community and Government Services and we can get back to the member on that timeline. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the timeline that minister will get back to us? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As soon as we can find out. So hopefully within the next couple days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* I have no more names on my list. Human Resource, grant summary, human resource operations, total operation and maintenance \$19,449,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to D5, human resource. Strategic human resource management. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, regarding the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation, as of today how many Government of Nunavut training proposals are being considered by the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are zero at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. As of today, up to today since the inception of this training corporation Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation, how many Nunavummiut that utilize this funding are now working for the Government of Nunavut or have worked for the Government of Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't know that information and I don't know if it would be something that we would be able to obtain. But maybe I can ask our acting assistant deputy minister to elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Chakonza, I believe. I'm sorry if I mispronounce your name.

Mr. Chakonza: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. Currently we have two programs which benefitted from the Makigiaqta funding, which is

the Nunavut teacher education program, and the pre-health practical nursing programs. As to the question on how many people are now employed from that program, we don't have that detail at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the responses. So this Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation was born to try to generate more Nunavummiut to get into these Government of Nunavut positions, as per article 23 of the Nunavut agreement. How does the department or the government know that it's actually working? That it's doing what it was meant to do? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I can please ask Mr. Chakonza to elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Chakonza.

Mr. Chakonza: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. As I mentioned, those two programs, the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, we do have graduates who are coming out of that program, as well as the pre-health practical nursing program. We do have graduates who are coming out of those programs, so from that angle we can say it is working. What we do not have right now is the number of graduates that have come through those programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Just before I go back to the member, that Makigiaqta Corporation fund started long before the teacher education program and pre-nursing were started, so I'm surprised that those are the only two that are listed as being successful, because that program has been going for, my guess is close to ten years before those programs got funding. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So is the department able to look into this and get back to us with some numbers to see if we're utilizing this program properly and meeting the criteria to what it was born for? Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you Mr. Chair. Yes, we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hopefully the department can get back to us soon with this.

I'll move on to my next line of questioning. It's around Inuktitut language. Minister, your department's Inuktitut language incentive policy expired October 15, 2024. What changes to the policy are being actively considered? Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. There are no changes so far. It's a very well used policy and we have about 800 people utilizing it, so it's running well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. Minister, there are approximately 5,500 positions in the Government of Nunavut. Approximately how many of them have been designated as requiring Inuktitut language proficiency? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. Some positions do need it. However, it's not a requirement for most positions. You can get the incentive if you speak Inuktitut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Mat'na.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. Minister, the 2021-2022 public service annual report indicates that 322 bilingual bonuses for Inuktitut have been awarded.

What is the government's estimate for how long it will take to achieve a workforce that is fluent in the Inuit language? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. I think it's hard to give a timeframe, as it's something that we're always trying to achieve and to strive for.

We do continue to provide Inuktitut training for staff and work to support them on their language goals, but at this time I can't give a timeline. Hopefully it would be sooner rather than later. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I understand it would be difficult to estimate how long it would take. What is the Government of Nunavut doing to give the public workforce time to take Inuktitut language courses? Is it done during the day? And how often is it being done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. It's done during the day, and as for the rest of the details, we can get back to the committee on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question, Minister. The Aging With Dignity Elders and Seniors Strategy was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 7, 2024. One of the strategies, goals and objectives is to improve communication with elders by requiring all Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut as a condition of work. How will your department be contributing to this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So we're working with the Department of Culture and Heritage on what positions meet the required training, and working on those details with the Department of Culture and Heritage to figure out the timeframe as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of questions here. First of all, as of today, how many Government of Nunavut training proposals are being considered by the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Zero. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I missed that response. Zero? Thank you. With that in mind, I think and I have suggestion. When I look at the needs within the civil service, there's always a high need for human resource professionals, finance professionals, and there's going to be an upcoming pretty dramatic need for people to be trained on the enterprise resource platform that's just being rolled out now in some pilot programs.

I was going to ask this in Nunavut Arctic College's appearance, but I think it's more fitting here. Other than office admin and the management studies through Nunavut Arctic College, there's nothing really associated directly with human resource staffing development, finance, even just some of the basic accounting procedures, and again as I mentioned the upcoming need for some training in enterprise resource platform.

And I think it's really a lost opportunity when we've got not just youth, but young adults or even adults across the territory that could very much work into these types of positions and fill the massive void that we have in having Nunavummiut, you know, when you look at the policy and the HR management of different departments, it's very important to continue to have those Northern voices at the table, especially when we're looking at policy development.

I realize that the Department of Human Resources, somewhat like the Department of Finance, becomes kind of a training ground where people gain experience working with the Department of Finance, like people gain human resource experience working with the central agency of the Department of Human Resources, and then can go out to different line departments and have that human resource capacity with some experience and practicality at the departmental level.

So I would like to encourage the department or the Government of Nunavut overall to consider putting a proposal together to work under third-party funding with the Nunavut Arctic College or some other entity that could be able to provide, whether it be certified courses – I'm not saying we need to have everyone with an HRM certification, but it sure would be nice to have more.

I'll leave that as a comment, but I would appreciate the Minister to entertain this idea. I think we've been saying for years these are some of the biggest gaps in our civil service of trying to keep people in departmental operations running smoothly. I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister, do you want to comment on comment? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for raising those comments.

I just want to first off say that it's great that there is Makigiaqta. However the department does note that we have stopped applying to Makigiaqta, just given the constraint of only being able to fund 30 per cent of a program. So it does put a strain on the department to fully fund a program and not have all of the funds available.

Going forward I know we have just heard a really great announcement this weekend with the Nunavut implementation contract that was signed. And with that, there are funds there that we are wanting to tap into to get public admin as a program. That is something that we're just discussing, and have the availability to have more options for training programs.

We do have, at the moment, an Inuit-only accredited human resource certificate program that is a great program with the Department of Human Resources, which provides training opportunities to develop human resource capacity and increase Inuit participation in the field. And that's done through Red River College.

So we do look forward to the funds that are going to be coming to Nunavut and exploring more training opportunities going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Strategy, human Resource management, total operations and maintenance, \$10,723,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page D3. Details of expenditures to be voted. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$30,172,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Are we in agreement with the Department of Human Resources is concluded?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Brief closing comments, Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the committee for your insight, your questions, comments, and bringing those forward to us.

I know there's always a lot of work to go forward, and we look forward to working on the questions that were raised here today. If you ever have any other questions, we're always available to support the constituents in our communities.

I would like to thank the interpreters for their work as well, and all of the staff with the Department of Human Resources and all of our public servants that are working for the Government of Nunavut. We value everybody.

Hopefully, there are so many positions out there, that people continue to look at those job advertised out there, and so many new opportunities with the Nunavut-wide work. And we look forward to having more people employed across our territory through different policies that have come forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. We'll take a couple minutes for the next department to get ready.

>>*Committee adjourned from 19:33 to 19:34*

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): I would like to call this committee to order. I would like to ask Mr. Joanasie, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee? Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in. For the record, Mr. Joanasie, please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Appearing before you and the committee with me are to my right, to your left, Deputy Minister Pauloosie Suvega. And to my left, to your right, is Nikki Nweze, who is the Director of Corporate Services.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present my department's proposed operations and maintenance budget for this fiscal year.

The Department of Environment's proposed budget for 2025-2026 is \$28.8 million, which is a \$1.3 million increase from 2024-2025. The proposed increase is a result of salary increases of \$809,000 in 2025-2026 and \$500,000 new funding for an Independent Power Producer Subsidy. This subsidy will demonstrate the Government of Nunavut's

support for Inuit-led renewable energy projects and help Nunavut take its first steps into large scale green energy production.

Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq is a key societal value for the Department. Therefore, we often have a shared mission with outside organizations, and as such, we were able to secure approximately \$8.33 million for various projects externally.

This external funding was applied to programs across all divisions within the department. We expect to continue to obtain such funding from outside sources in the coming fiscal year.

As you are aware, Nunavummiut continues to see the impacts of climate change in our territory. Action must be taken to reduce and adapt to its effects.

Therefore, the department is working on a Nunavut-wide climate change risk and resiliency assessment. The objective of which is to identify and rate the likelihood of risks of various climate change impacts and to highlight opportunities for adaptation action and resiliency across Government of Nunavut departments.

I am pleased to report that the Department of Environment, working in partnership with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities, has started a Solid Waste Initiatives Working Group to begin the development of a waste management strategy in the Territory.

Partnering with Nunavut Association of Municipalities will help municipalities determine how best to manage solid waste. We look forward to working collectively on solid waste initiatives for the betterment of Nunavut.

The Department is responsible for the administration of the *Wildlife Act*, for the co-management of wildlife under the Nunavut Agreement, and for fulfilling the Government of Nunavut's wildlife management responsibilities under federal legislation as well as national and international agreements, and conventions.

Caribou management continues to be a high priority for the department. The department has prioritized finalizing the Central and North Baffin Caribou survey in 2025. Finalizing the Foxe Basin polar bear survey is also a high priority in the new fiscal year.

The department will also conduct community consultations and present the 2023 survey results for the Dolphin and Union, the Southampton Island and the Beverly caribou herds. The department is also planning consultations with Baffin Island communities on the management of the Baffin Island caribou in 2025. Final reports will be shared with co-management partners and submitted to Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for review.

Mr. Chair, the revitalization of fox trapping in Nunavut is also a priority for the Department. The Fox Trapper Training Pilot Project is in its final stages, with the intent of launching the first program this fall.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Environment's work continues to be guided by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific research to ensure meaningful progress in achieving our goals to benefit the territory.

The Department of Environment looks to the future needs and concerns of our territory and aims at balancing such needs and concerns for future sustainability and prosperity of Nunavut.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today to highlight departmental priorities, and I will be pleased to take any questions you may have. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: Does the chair of the standing committee have any opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and the business plan of the Department of Environment.

The department's proposed 2025-2026 operations and maintenance budget is \$28,836,000. This represents an increase of 4.8 per cent from the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The number of departmental positions remains unchanged at 144.5.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

The Department of Environment is responsible for the government's Climate Change Secretariat. The secretariat's 2018-2019 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2020. No other annual reports have been tabled since that time.

The extent to which the department has been able to fill the division's 9.0 positions is unclear.

The department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates include \$500,000 in funding for a new Independent Power Producer Subsidy Program, which is included within the division's budget. The standing committee strongly encourages the minister to table a copy of the policy governing the administration of this new program at the earliest opportunity.

The department's Support for Harvesters and Wildlife Co-Management Policy was approved in May of 2017 and sunsetted on March 31, 2022. The department's timetable for revising or renewing the policy is unclear. A number of different funding programs fall under this policy. The standing committee continues to recommend that the minister begin the practice of tabling a comprehensive annual report in the Legislative Assembly on the administration of the Support for Harvesters and Wildlife Co-Management Policy.

A number of concerns have been expressed by the standing committee regarding the department's Disaster Compensation Program, the purpose of which is to compensate hunters for equipment losses resulting from natural disasters. The standing committee recognizes that not all accidents resulting in equipment loss can be classified as natural disasters, and continues to encourage the department to work with hunters and trappers organizations and other stakeholders to explore the feasibility of providing subsidized equipment insurance to provide broader coverage for hunters.

Nunavut's current *Wildlife Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2003. Section 176 of the legislation requires the minister to prepare and table in the Legislative Assembly a comprehensive report every five years concerning wildlife management programs and related matters. The standing committee continues to look forward to the tabling of the 2023 report.

The 2018 report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on June 5, 2019. This report indicated that "some of the greatest threats to the long-term viability of Kivalliq caribou herds include development effects, such as roads, internet sales of caribou meat, and the associated increased harvest." This is an issue that has been raised in the Legislative Assembly by a number of members.

The standing committee recognizes that this is a complex issue and recognizes that the engagement of all parties, including Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, regional wildlife boards, hunters' and trappers' organizations and airlines operating in Nunavut, will be required to address it.

The department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it will undertake a number of wildlife population surveys during the upcoming fiscal year, including a "survey of the Southampton Island caribou population." The standing committee encourages the department to ensure that the results of such important surveys are published and made publicly available.

The standing committee remains concerned at the ongoing high vacancy rate in the department's Igloolik office. During the minister's recent appearance, the standing committee was informed that the department has been working to develop a memorandum of understanding concerning these positions. The standing committee looks forward to receiving additional details concerning this work. The standing

committee also looks forward to the department moving forward with its new “Wildlife Guardian Training Program.”

The Minister of Environment is responsible for administering the territorial *Environmental Protection Act*, which includes provisions concerning the discharge of contaminants into the environment. The standing committee continues to recommend that the minister begin the practice of tabling an annual report in the Legislative Assembly that contains comprehensive information regarding the administration of the *Environmental Protection Act*, including detailed information regarding enforcement actions against entities suspected of contravening the law and expenditures related to contaminated sites.

The department’s 2022-2026 business plan indicated that “the contaminated sites working group has been re-established in 2022 with the goal of supporting the Government of Nunavut in delineating liabilities under the direction of the federal Auditor General.” During recent televised standing committee hearings on the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 territorial public accounts, members heard testimony from the department concerning this issue. The standing committee also notes the impact that the recently signed Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement will have on this issue.

The department’s draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that one of the Environmental Protection Division’s responsibilities is “supporting the Department of Environment and the Government of Nunavut in the delivery of obligations under the Nunavut Agreement for environmental assessment, land use planning and general monitoring.” The proposed 2025-2026 main estimates of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs indicate that the government’s Responsible Development Division has been transferred from the Department of Economic Development and Transportation to the Intergovernmental Affairs Branch. The division has been renamed the Sustainable Development Division.

The Nunavut Planning Commission’s draft land use plan was submitted to the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in June 2023. The standing committee is hopeful that the centralization of this function will expedite the review process.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Environment. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Do members have any general comments before we proceed to detailed questions? I’m not seeing. None.

We will now proceed to page-by-page review of the main estimates. Starting on page I4. Program management, total operations and maintenance, \$21,752,000. Questions? Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Good evening, Mr. Chairman, I do have questions.

(interpretation ends) In your department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates indicate that the budget for climate change secretariat is increasing by approximately 27 per cent, from 1.796 million for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to 2.28 million for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

How was the amount of this 285,000 increase determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): My apologies. I'm going to ask the member to rephrase the question, please.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee, rephrase your question, please.

Ms. Killiktee: Your department's draft for 2025-2026 main estimates indicate the budget for the climate change secretariat is increasing by approximately 27 per cent from 1.796 million from the 2024-2025 fiscal year to 2.281 million for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. How was the amount of this 285,000 increase determined? *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* (interpretation) Minister Joanasie, does that clarify the question?

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Yes, thank you. Perhaps as this is under finance, I will pass it on to Ms. Nweze.

Ms. Nweze: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Climate Change Secretariat budget was increased by 500,000 for independent power subsidy. We also reduced the budget by 15,000. We relocated it to another division where the money was needed. So I don't know where you are getting 240. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee: My apologies, Mr. Chairman, I didn't give the correct number. I was trying to. 485,000 increase determined. How was it again determined for increase. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): 485,000 is directed to that. Ms. Nweze can add to that, through you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Nweze.

Ms. Nweze: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said before, Climate Change Secretariat received 500,000 for independent power producer subsidy. We also reduced the budget by 15,000, because they are not spending their contract budget, and we moved it to another division. That's why the total increase is 485,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): I was just staring at you. I must be getting tired. My apologies. I'm sure you want to go home or leave.

Now what reason or what new thing, what sort of program or what are you adding to this budget?

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): The \$500,000 we've requested that through Climate Changes Secretariat, and the 485,000 that was mentioned, we're planning to give that to the Qulliq Energy Corporation so that Inuit organizations, if they want to make more power out of the sun or wind, then the Qulliq Energy Corporation will be able to purchase the power.

That money we're giving to the Qulliq Energy Corporation, it will be used as a subsidy to Inuit organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for clarifying that. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2025-2026 main estimates include funding for 9.0 positions in the Climate Change Secretariat.

As of today, which of these positions are filled by indeterminant employees, which are which of these positions are filled by contractors, or casual employees, and which of these positions are vacant? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps my deputy minister can respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Suvega.

Mr. Suvega (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the nine positions, we filled more than half of them and some of them are Inuit, and the rest are still being advertised.

We have hired a person in Iqaluit and in another place, but the ADM can explain about the new hire that we just did. And I would like to ask Ms. Nweze to add to that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Ms. Nweze, please proceed.

Ms. Nweze: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): I would like to change witnesses.

Chairman: Are you in agreement to change the witnesses?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the official and escort in the official.

For the record, Minister Joanasié, please introduce your new official.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my apologies. Cameron DeLong, Director of the Climate Change Secretariat.

Chairman: Mr. DeLong, please proceed.

Mr. DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. The Climate Change Secretariat currently has four positions filled with indeterminate employees. There's the manager of knowledge mobilization, manager of climate change adaptation, manager of climate change mitigation.

We have three casual employees, a climate change adaptation specialist, which is filled with an Inuit employee; we have a knowledge mobilization specialist, which is filled on a CSA, a casual staffing action; as well as the energy advisor that is filled on a casual basis as well. And then my position as the director is indeterminate. So four indeterminate and three positions filled with casual employees.

We have a vacancy still in our knowledge mobilization section. There is an empty position still in the climate change adaptation division, as well as one in the climate change mitigation division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for clearly explaining that, but then it comes up another question from that.

Now, that position that has not been filled, I think you said that there was just one position that hasn't been filled. How long have you been trying to get someone into that position?

And my other question will be what is the closing date for the position that is being advertised. Do you give them a closing date and do you give them information as to when the job will actually start. I think that has to be part of the problem, where people get tired of waiting. That's why I'm asking the question like that. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. To explain further, there are three vacant positions in the Climate Change Secretariat. And if you can let the director to explain further, if it's okay with the Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. DeLong.

Mr. DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. The positions are currently with the Department of Human Resources for staffing. I couldn't tell you the exact timeframe today. It has been several months, for certain, going through the process.

Part of the reason for the delay is that we have been trying acquire housing for those positions as well, so that tends to take a little bit longer to assign housing to the particular position. We monitor that monthly, e-mails to confirm the status of the job action.

And to your point, I guess we are anxiously awaiting that process to continue forward so that we can get these jobs advertised and people, applicants can come in to fill those positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for explaining that further. I would like to move on to a different question.

(interpretation ends) you department's 2021-2024 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2021-2022 fiscal year was to update the climate change statistics plan.

As of today, what is the status of this work and when will the updated plan be ready for tabling here in the Legislative Assembly?

And also to add in in this question, what is done and what are the plans (interpretation) I just added the last two at the end. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies, can the member clarify, (interpretation ends) WHAT year of the business plan? I don't think I heard part of the question either. (interpretation) I didn't hear part of the question. My apologies.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee: Your department's 2021-2024 business plan indicated that one of his priorities to the 2021-2022 fiscal year was to update the climate change strategic plan. As of today, what is the status of this work and which will the updated be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you for clarifying your question. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. I would like my deputy minister to respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Suvega, please proceed.

Mr. Suvega (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. This started with the Department of Environment. They have been compiled, but then there's information added to it from another department, or another division in the department. So the staff are reviewing that to see how we're going to complete it.

In the future, once it's more complete, we plan to table it in the House, but right now it's being reviewed in office, because we have to review the new things that have been added to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of that and the fact that it is being reviewed, can you explain what has been completed, and what have you planned about this for its announcement or its tabling. This will be my last question for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) like I mentioned in my opening comments, climate change is a shared priority with many other stakeholders.

We do have a shared vision with climate resiliency in Canada. This is ongoing work. My department does advocate for inclusion on northern priorities, as it relates to federal climate change policies.

With that, we are working towards implementing the national adaptation strategy, but having a Nunavut lens to it, providing our input and our unique place in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* I will go to the next person. I made a mistake in my pages here. I would like to go to page I4, Corporate Management. Total operations and maintenance, \$7,084,000. Questions? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad you have switched witnesses. I think you'll be utilizing him. I would like to talk about the renewable energy rebate for cabin and homeowners program.

My first question is how many applications have been received, and in which communities for renewable energy rebate funds, how many applications have been received this fiscal year and from which communities. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the home owner grant, we have 11 applicants, and six have been completed. Applicants come from Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay, and Rankin Inlet.

For the renewable energy cabin grant program, we have 401 applicants, almost every community. It's all communities. I don't know if there's another part to that question. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very happy to see the uptake in the cabin program as well.

The minister mentioned that six applications were completed. How many homes have been granted funds to install alternative energy systems in their homes this fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm told there's none this past year. I just wanted to say that these statistics on our renewable energy programs, we are planning to put these online at the Climate Change Secretariat website in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the technology is still advancing and there's been some question on the value of electronic vehicles, such as snowmobiles, cars, scooters, that type of thing in the Arctic. But I think some people, especially if they have already looked at and been granted to install alternative energy systems in their homes, it may be a viable path forward for some people, and may help the advancement to the technology.

Is the Climate Change Secretariat or the department considering a program to provide rebates on electronic vehicles? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not at this time. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, a lot of the talk around climate change and the carbon tax, and I know carbon tax revenues are used to provide support for these programs.

The new leader of the Liberal Party that was just elected last night has already come out and stated that that he's going to be removing carbon tax immediately, I believe he said, but if not, if and when he's elected. And the Conservative leader has already said I think he's platforming on axe the tax. So if he does get elected, the carbon tax is going to be eliminated that way as well.

What are the plans for the Climate Change Secretariat or the department to continue to fund those types of programs without that revenue coming in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll continue to find alternatives around this. We'll see what we can do around how to find funds for the secretariat maintaining the operations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickers.

Mr. Hickers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I realize Mr. Carney just gave that notice last night, but like I said, the leader of the Conservative Party has been saying for months that he would be removing the carbon tax.

I would hope that the department would be taking some planning time to look at alternatives. A kind of a wait-and-see approach I don't think is really appropriate when we're talking about a program where you're seeing over 400 applicants coming in and providing some great programming, I think.

Especially the homeowners, I have home owner in my constituencies that has seen a significant reduction in his power costs, to a point where it is cents on the dollar in a month. So I just wanted to encourage the department to start planning now to take a look at what alternatives are going to be coming forward, because to me if either of the two, Liberals or Conservatives get in, it sounds like the carbon tax is going to be gone, and so is that revenue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments being made. With the 500,000 we were introducing to offset some, or provide subsidy to Qulliq Energy Corporation.

As an example, we do anticipate for the cost savings through independent power producers like resource development projects, that the costs that we save from those projects perhaps could be a source for climate change, or the work that we're doing in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Next person on my list is Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to stick with Climate Change Secretariat. First, members asked about the number of employees vacancy. If I'm correct, there's nine positions; there's a director and three managers. In my opinion, it seems very top-end-heavy, three managers. So that means each manager is supervising one, two employees at the most. Am I correct? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. If you'll have the director, Mr. DeLong, respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. DeLong, please proceed.

Mr. DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. The positions of manager have been filled in an effort to continue to move the files forward, all the while working with HR to try and staff some of the lower tier positions as we move forward.

The priority was on continuing to staff those positions that report to the managers in the interim, as we work through the process of getting all of the positions out with HR and advertised to the public. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I never asked about the priority of the managers. What I said was with the number of positions, with three managers, am I correct to say that each manager is supervising either one employee or two employees at the most? We may have a manager that is supervising one employee; is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other managers in the Department of Environment, I'm pretty sure that each manager probably supervises more than one or two employees. What is the number of employees that a manager typically manages within the department? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. I'll have my deputy respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Suvega.

Mr. Suvega (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) Most division managers manage about two to three employees. If

not employees, then they are also managing central interdepartmental type files or intergovernmental type files as well.

So speaking to the climate change one, if they are talking about national adaptation strategy, it's also managing some of those, whether they are interdepartmental or intergovernmental files. I hope that clarifies the question thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for an example, something that's very close to here that either the minister or the deputy can answer easily is that for the wildlife division, for the conservation officers, the manager for South Baffin, how many persons does that manager supervise? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Suvega.

Mr. Suvega (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It fluctuates. (interpretation ends) I'll respond in English for better clarity. Those numbers fluctuate, depending on the time of the year or activity that's undertaken, whether it's wildlife operations, surveys, or sometimes the quiet periods as well. Depending on vacancies, it could be anywhere from four per division.

On wildlife, it could be anywhere from about one minimum per community in the Qikiqtaaluk, seven in Kivalliq, and about three or four in Kitikmeot. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll go on, but I just wanted to make my point that Climate Change Secretariat appears to be very top-end heavy, but I'll go on.

The on the minister's opening comments on page 1, the new funding, \$500,000 for independent power producers, can the minister provide the committee here with a policy on how this \$500,000 on new spending will be spent. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The policy is up for review, and we anticipate that it will be available for and we plan to share it with my colleagues once it has been approved. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know when this policy will be done, because I don't support \$500,000 in new funding without a policy on how it's going to be spent.

Who qualifies to get it? Is there a cap amount? It's asking us to approve \$500,000 with no thought on a policy on how this money will be spent. When will this policy be approved, complete and approved and made available to the members? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I indicated, this money would be as a grant contribution to Qulliq Energy Corporation, and they would in turn use it to subsidize the power they purchase from independent power producers, Inuit-led resource development corporations.

And so once we have that policy in place, again, we've committed to sharing it with my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the policy actually being worked on right now? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's been drafted, and again it's up for review. Once it's been approved, I'll share it with my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the way the approval process for budgets works is, I wish we could say we won't approve this budget until we see the policy, but it doesn't work like that. If we approve it, it doesn't matter if the policy comes ahead or not. The money is there to be spent.

The only way we can either do is delete this \$500,000 until we get a policy and a sub-bill can come; if we approve it as it is, with no policy, even if we say you can't spend this money until there's a policy in front of us, it does not work that way.

I'll ask the minister again: Can the minister provide us with the policy, so that we can make an informed decision on this budget that's being requested to go to Qulliq Energy Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'll have to confer with my cabinet colleagues on this one, because they still haven't seen it, either. We haven't deliberated on it yet. Maybe I can confer with my colleagues before you consider this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the minister going to make a motion to delete the \$500,000 from this budget, then? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wasn't intending to, no. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But the way it works is, you just said you want to hold this off until you confer with your colleagues. Once we approve this budget, it's approved. The only way to mitigate this is either to delete it. Once it's approved, it's approved; you can do what you want with it what you state you want going to do with it.

So just a clarification for the minister. He stated he's going to confer with his colleague before we can deal with the 500,000. Can I get a clarification from the minister whether he's willing to delete the 500,000 for the budget until there's a policy? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have a policy, and again, we are intending to and once we approve this budget, we are planning to introduce that policy to go with this budget line item.

I would appreciate if my colleagues can trust that we are in good faith bringing this forward on behalf of Nunavummiut to support Qulliq Energy Corporation, as well as Inuit-led independent power producers to tap into clean green energy sources. And that's where we're trying to head with this, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm a bit confused to as why the Department of Environment applied for this 500,000 instead of the Qulliq Energy Corporation,

because the Department of Environment is putting it in their budget and then giving it to Qulliq Energy Corporation.

The last time there was any funds given to Qulliq Energy Corporation, they actually applied for it on their own for the streetlight replacement project, and that also was 500,000.

So if I can ask the minister, because I'm going to assume that Minister of Environment was talking to the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, as to why it's being done this way. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As per my letter to the committee, after a committee appearance we did touch on this item. Given that Qulliq Energy Corporation is at arm's length from the government and they don't come through for appropriations regularly, but this is how we're approaching it, through the Climate Change Secretariat lens in support of clean and green energy. That's where we're trying to take this, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. This is very similar to the LED street light project that Qulliq Energy Corporation does, so I'll just does the Minister of Environment does he recall the Qulliq Energy Corporation applying for \$500,000 for the street light replacement project and it was approved?

A Member: It's not capital.

Mr. Savikataaq: It doesn't matter. It's the same process. Mr. Chairman, can the member please not interrupt.

It's the same process. I'm not asking about the capital project, I'm asking about the process. Does the Minister remember? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Members, please don't interrupt when members are speaking. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do remember, and as pointed out, it was a capital item, I believe. And again, Qulliq Energy Corporation, I think there was a time where they did come through this House to get their appropriations reviewed and approved, and I believe we moved away from that again.

I believe my colleague Minister Main would like to chime in, if you'll allow, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the Climate Change Secretariat bringing forward this initiative, it's something from Qulliq Energy Corporation that we are excited to see. There was a pricing strategy report that was done back in 2021 and it identified that if a subsidy program could be established, that it would support more renewable energy projects in Nunavut.

As Minister Joanasie pointed out, Qulliq Energy Corporation doesn't come for annual appropriations, and so it was determined that this would best rest with a government department. There were a number of options in terms of which government department would be most appropriate. It was determined that Environment would be the best spot to place this program. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the policy was presented at the same time as this funding, then I would not have an issue with this.

I remember a few programs that were deleted because they had no policy to go with the program. The normal process, in my opinion, is if you're coming in with a new program, you come up with a policy first, exactly how this money is going to be allocated. It's just not right when funds are new funds with no policy are put forward and we're asked to approve it.

But I'll go on because I have more questions here. Also, in the opening comments there at the bottom of the first page 2, it says: "As you're aware Nunavummiut continue to see the impacts of climate change in our territory," and I don't doubt that. "Action must be taken to reduce and adapt to its effect." What is Nunavut's carbon footprint in terms of percentage within Canada? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nunavut produces approximately 1,300 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas annually. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I was not clear. I just wanted to make a point of what percentage? Like is it ten per cent of Canada's carbon footprint? Is it five per cent? Is it one per cent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe I know where the member's coming to. According to Environment and Climate Change Canada's latest data, Nunavut is responsible for about 0.1 per cent of Canada's total greenhouse gases. But again, we do need to do our part, and our environment is counting on us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. George Hickey): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to point that out, that due to our population size, we're a high per capita user, but our output is very little compared to what the rest of Canada puts out.

I don't disagree that we have to do our part, but the price of gasoline keeps going up. In fact, if the carbon tax is going to hit, April 1 we're going to see an increase again in our gasoline, and Nunavummiut currently have the highest price for gasoline within Canada, I believe. It's very high right now.

I know part of that is because we buy it once a year, and we hope to buy it when the price is right, but sometimes it doesn't work out.

I don't have much time left so I'll go on to another one about the caribou sales. I know that beneficiaries are allowed to sell caribou and there are no restrictions.

I would just like to get, so Nunavummiut will know, what are the conditions? Can businesses or outlets buy as much caribou as they want from a beneficiary? Are there any restrictions? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Where there is no total allowable harvest or non-quota limitations, I believe that only dictates when there's a limitation on caribou harvesting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the old days, there used to be a business that was buying caribou and re-selling. Used to have a, you'd get a licence to deal meat and game. That is no longer in existence? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. If a business wanted to re-sell caribou meat, do they need any type of licence? Or they can buy as much, as long as there's no total allowable harvest, or even if there is a total allowable harvest, can they buy as much caribou as they want to re-sell? For example, the meat plant in Rankin, or if there's a restaurant here in Iqaluit, that serves caribou. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, from what our understanding is, there are no restrictions, but they do have a voluntary limit of how much they will buy or purchase the number of caribou each year. But again, it's a self-imposed harvesting limit. I believe the hunters and trappers organization is consulted on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As this is bordering between economic development and environment, I'm not sure whether the minister would have those numbers. What is the self-imposed limits for the purchasing of caribou for the meat plant in Rankin Inlet. I'm just curious. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the exact number. I can commit to bring it back to my colleague, though. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Minister and to your officials. On the subject of climate change, who in Nunavut said that we're experiencing climate change? Like, who's giving the direction that Nunavut should be concentrating on this? If we're going to be spending money on it, if I can use Baker Lake as an example, the settlement was formed in 1955, so it's not that old. Nunavut's not that old.

But who said we're going through climate change that we're spending money on it, or you're asking for approval to spend money on climate change? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It sounds like a rhetorical question to me. However, I think we have heard that Inuit have said this. Scientists have said this. There's different signals and a lot of research out there that points to temperatures fluctuating, animals migrating, all that. There's a lot of evidence out there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping the minister would say hunters and trappers or organizations, or elders groups, or respected elders across Nunavut, or respected people across Nunavut came and said "We're going through climate change." I was hoping there was backwards data to rely on. Does the minister have that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did say that. I've been saying this. I guess I'm saying it generally, but I guess I don't know what study I need to point to that Inuit have been involved with, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did hear the minister say that he's heard it, but it doesn't sound like there's a document documented from elders or HTOs or whatever. It sounds like hearsay to me. But is there any documentation across Nunavut saying the elders in Kugluktuk said there's climate change? The hunters from Pond Inlet said there's climate change? Fishers from Arviat are saying there's climate change? Is there documentation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): *Qujannamiik*. Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think I'm going to bark up that tree, Mr. Chair. I think I'm willing to provide some references. I don't have them right here, right now that I can point to, but I'll commit to coming back to the committee with maybe three or five sources that we can point to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. That helps a bit. Doesn't sound so much like hearsay any more. If there's documentation across Nunavut saying there's climate change, then there's your proof to back up on.

Now, the \$500,000 that you're asking for the independent power producer subsidy that you would give to Qulliq Energy Corporation, I believe the minister said it would be

Inuit-led. So entities that are trying to create power through independent power. Does that mean hamlets would not be eligible, it's only Inuit-led firms or companies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. My apologies. Yes, right now we're targeting Inuit-led projects, but the market is so small right now. There's a project in Sanikiluaq. I think some solar farm planned for Naujaat. But we perhaps could expand it to involve municipalities if and when it's viable for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I'm not mistaken, there have been at least two hamlets that have been looking into independent power producer programs, and if they are already eliminated are right from the get-go, that doesn't help spur projects in that field, which is why I brought it up.

So if this is approved, will the Department of Environment have a say in the application process when there's an entity that is asking for monies from Qulliq Energy Corporation? Is the Department of Environment going to be involved in the selection process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, and just to clarify, Qulliq Energy Corporation's independent power producer program, Inuit organizations, Inuit businesses and municipalities are eligible. But for the review of the applications, Environment would not be involved. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): *Qujannamiik.* I have no more names on the list. (interpretation ends) corporate management \$7,084,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page I5, Program Management, total operations and maintenance, \$21,752,000. Questions. Not seeing none. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq. Sorry.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Sorry, colleagues I have a couple of questions here in regard to the guardian training program. Your department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that when you have it's priorities for 2025-2026 fiscal year is "to finalize the wildlife guardian training program to promote and provide employment opportunities within this field for Nunavummiut."

And the question is, Mr. Chairman, how will the responsibilities of wildlife guardians be different from those of your department's conservation officers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And we do plan on having this training program kind of as a bridge to fill the conservation office positions. Basically the wildlife guardians would do similar or same function as what a conservation officer would do. However, they would not be able to do the enforcements on wildlife according to the *Wildlife Act* for example. So they would be complementary, but also it's kind of like a stepping stone to go into that conservation officer position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two more questions on this topic. Approximately how many wildlife guardians are planned to be hired during the 2025-2026 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So right now we currently have four wildlife guardians employed under a casual staffing action. And this includes Kugaaruk, Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, and Rankin Inlet. We do try to identify communities where there's no conservation officers employed to perhaps hire a casual wildlife guardian that would get on-the-job training and get to know the job a bit more, and perhaps over time fill that conservation officer position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for your response. So in other words you're saying the communities with no conservation officers do have wildlife guardians? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps my DM can respond to the question. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Suvega.

Mr. Suvega: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that question. We try to target communities where there's an existing conservation officer for some of those supervisory capabilities for a guardian employee. We try to be very careful around the enforcement piece concerning guardian employees, because this measure is meant to be capacity-building for these employees, to move on hopefully to this type of a career. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Earlier Minister Gross said wildlife research positions were being moved from Igloolik to Cambridge Bay, due to the positions being vacant for a long time. I'm wondering if the minister can confirm that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have out of the nine vacant positions in the research wildlife research station in Igloolik, or sorry, out of the nine vacant research positions, seven of them are in Igloolik. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that. So when we say that the smaller communities at this time are being stripped of programs, so perhaps other programs will fill those holes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps if it's taking, we're not trying to take away positions, with you these positions when they are not filled for a long time, they don't seem to have any benefits to Igloolik or to our government. The vacancies are long, some positions not being filled five years. We have to take steps for that reason.

As is, we have put together a memorandum of understanding with the federal government. We also have research station in Cambridge Bay, that if possible we can move the position to that community. It's an option we've considered. But it's something we'll consider further what others.

And as ministers we've also discussed this issue as Department of Environment, whether or not we would take them back to Igloolik and knowing that some smaller communities want positions or jobs available. It's something we have considered.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, as the smaller communities are also part of Nunavut and that they should not be stripped of programs. And in fact, we should see more activities in the smaller communities and not left with respect to jobs.

I did discuss options we can take. For example, Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit. That can be an option, or the wildlife guardians. So the options are there, so let's go. Let's consider them further.

When we see programs just taken away from the smaller community is not appropriate. So I would urge that you try and find what other programs can be put there. Perhaps if those positions are being taken away, have something replace them as government and communities, and it would be more clearer. Just a comment. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Minister, do you wish to respond to a comment? Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Yes, thank you for raising this issue. The other departments are also listening here. I don't run other departments. Irrespective your comments are comments we've heard, we all heard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Ms. Quassa, are you done. According to my list, Ms. Nutarak is next.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your department's 2023-2024 main estimates include 100,000 in funding for disaster compensation program. However, your department spent 8,000 under this program during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. How many applications were received by your department during the 2023-2024 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2024, I believe the question is about 2024-2025. There has been seven up to now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2023-2024 fiscal year is what I was asking about. So why were only less than \$8,000 approved? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasic.

Hon. David Joanasic: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They have a policy and they all have eligibility criteria and they follow them for the programs. But we will be having a review of the policy and we will look at the requests that we receive and see how we can improve the way we do things. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good news and I would like to advise them that the disaster compensation program has many pages that need to be filled out in order to apply for it, and they are confusing. We have had to help constituents, and I know that it really needs to be improved. The forms need to be made easier to understand and easier to fill out, and not much of the budget has been used. That's what I wanted to say. That's all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Minister, would you like to comment on a comment? That's it for the names on my list. (interpretation ends) Program management, total operations and maintenance, \$21,752,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to I13. Details of expenditures to be voted, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$28,836,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister, do you have closing remarks?

Hon. David Joanasic: Thank you, Mr. Chair, very briefly. I thank all the members for their questions and critique on our budgets, but also I made some commitments and I plan on following through with those.

Mr. Chair, I would like to thank all my officials that have been here today, but also in the background that have prepared me for this day. And I wish everyone else a great evening, and thank you for your consideration.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort officials out. We'll take a 10-minute break before we go to the next department.

>>*Committee adjourned from 21:01 to 21:13*

Chairman: I would like to call this committee to order. I would like to remind members and witnesses that do not press the buttons on your panel here. Microphone stays on and off. There's an employee that does the controlling. Please don't press the button.

I would like to ask Premier Akeegok, do you have officials you would like to appear before this committee.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let Minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in. For the record, Premier Akeegok please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening to my colleagues here. It's great that I'm able to be here. On my left is Deputy Minister Anna Fowler, and on my right is the Chief Negotiator For Devolution, Stephen Mansell. And also with us the Director of Corporate Services, Ariel Atienza, will be available if needed. I believe I can get started.

First of all, I would like to say thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the opportunity to present the 2025-2026 Main Estimates and the 2025-2026 Business Plan for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

As I noted, I am being accompanied by my Deputy Minister of EIA, Anna Fowler, Chief Negotiator Devolution, Stephen Mansell, and Director of Corporate Services, Ariel Atienza.

Mr. Chair, EIA provides overall management and support to the premier and cabinet, to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of our government. Accordingly, EIA leads the coordination of policy and legislative development with Government of Nunavut's departments and agencies to ensure that Katujjiluta is effectively implemented.

In addition to managing the government's priorities, EIA also ensures that government's priorities and interests are represented and promoted nationally and internationally.

Mr. Chair, our government is committed to a business planning process that better supports our mandate and ensures accountability. Our government's first business plan included the mandate priorities and moved the government away from business planning on a three-year rolling basis, to recognize that government could only plan for its term in office.

Mr. Chair, this year members will see two new adjustments to the presentation of the Business Plan and the Main Estimates. The financial information has been removed, and the business plan is focused on our programs and our priorities. All the financial information is presented in the main estimate document. This new presentation makes it clear where the funding is for each of our programs within the document our votes are based on.

The second change, Mr. Chair, is that we have relocated the Inuit Employment Planning to a stand-alone document. While some priorities linked to Inuit Employment Planning may still be integrated into their business plans, they will now be presented with the division most responsible.

Mr. Chair, the department's current main estimates for the 2025-2026 fiscal year total \$19.936 million. The breakdown of this budget allows for \$15,326,000 allocated for salaries and benefits, \$335,000 for grants and contributions, and \$4.275 million for departmental operations and maintenance.

Mr. Chair, EIA will have a total of 99 PYs in 2025-2026, which is down from the 118 of last year. Twenty-two of the positions are dedicated to staff for cabinet and the Commissioner of Nunavut. The reduction in person years is primarily due to the transfer of 26 government liaison officer positions to the Department of Community Services.

Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs has added four new positions to create an Elders Secretariat within the department. My department has formed the Elders Secretariat to ensure that government's commitments to Elders are met. The secretariat will work cross-departmentally to coordinate communications, ensure accountability, and support implementation of Aging with Dignity Elders and Seniors Strategy.

In addition, EIA is creating a Sustainable Development Division within the Intergovernmental Affairs branch by adding two new positions along with one existing position transferred with the function from the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. This division serves as a liaison between the parties responsible for environmental assessment, land use planning, and general monitoring.

Our government remains committed to the obligations under Article 32 of the Nunavut Agreement, and our department has an important role in fulfilling that obligation through the implementation of the Katujjiqatigiinni Article 32 Policy.

During the term of this government, we have coordinated with NTI to support their review of approximately 88 items.

Mr. Chair, we are doing a lot of important work as we implement the mandate we created together with the regular members.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to present EIA's Main Estimates and Business Plan. I welcome comments from my colleagues and members and look forward to answering your questions. *Qujannamiik*.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you. Does the chair of standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The department's proposed 2025-2026 operations and maintenance budget is \$19,936,000. This represents a 22 per cent decrease from the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is decreasing from 118 to 99. These decreases are primarily attributable to the transfer of the department's Government Liaison Office to the new Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

The government's new Aging with Dignity: Elders and Seniors Strategy was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 7, 2024. The draft 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs include funding for the creation of a new Elders' Secretariat.

The Elders and Seniors Strategy includes a number of broad goals and objectives, including the introduction of a new requirement for "all Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut as a condition of employment" and the introduction of a "guaranteed basic income to reduce poverty."

The standing committee strongly urges the minister to bring forward and table a realistic and achievable action plan to implement the strategy.

As an update was just tabled last week, I'm sure my colleagues are reviewing this document with care.

A new Immigration Division was established within the department's Intergovernmental Affairs branch during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. A number of members have raised concerns regarding the extent to which the government is addressing such issues as recruiting foreign-trained health professionals, and the standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the work of this new division.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the standing committee also encourages the division to work closely with partners in developing appropriate cross-cultural orientation programs for new residents of the territory, in addition to monitoring the impact of the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program on Nunavut's labour market.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' Mandate Letter indicated that one of the department's priorities has been to "review the current status of decentralization... and develop an updated decentralization action plan with the support of the Department of Human Resources."

The Decentralization Review report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2024. One of the recommendations contained in the Decentralization Review report is to "continue to consider the need for any dysfunctional headquarters offices to be moved from a community to Iqaluit or a regional centre."

Mr. Chairman and Members, the department's proposed 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it is "working with the Department of Human Resources to develop a Government of Nunavut response to the recommendations", which I recognize was just tabled, and I'm sure my colleagues will also be reviewing that document as well.

Section 8 of the territorial Statistics Act requires that the annual report of the Bureau of Statistics be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The 2018-2019 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2019. The 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 consolidated annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2024. The standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the division's work.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the department's draft 2025-2026 business plan indicates that it "coordinates and participates in Nunavut implementation panel meetings to monitor and discuss implementation activities of the Nunavut Agreement." Mr. Chairman and Members, it also indicates that "parties completed negotiations and are finalizing the 10-year implementation contract and the independent review of Article 23 is underway", for which the minister had an update in his minister's statement today.

It also indicates that "the independent Article 23 review is scheduled to be completed in July 2025."

The Nunavut Implementation Panel's 2012-2013 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 5, 2019. No other annual reports have been tabled since that time. Given the infrequency with which the panel produces annual reports, the standing committee encourages the minister to provide periodic updates to the Legislative Assembly on its activities and initiatives.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the standing committee also encourages the minister to table the results of the "independent Article 23 review" at the earliest opportunity.

On January 18, 2024, the Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement was signed. The standing committee remains concerned at the continued lack of public clarity concerning such issues as the number of federal positions that will be devolved to the territorial government, as well as the extent to which the transfer of current federal employees to the territorial public service will impact Inuit employment rates.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the department's draft 2025-2026 business plan also indicates that "the Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene and Athabasca Denesuliné Agreements were initialed in 2023, and the department continues to work to finalize the agreements, implementation plans, and subsequent amendments to the Nunavut Agreement, including a separate implementation contract for these amendments."

Mr. Chairman and Members, the standing committee encourages the government to provide regular updates on this issue to the Legislative Assembly and impacted communities in the Kivalliq region.

The department's proposed 2025-2026 main estimates indicate that the government's Responsible Development Division has been transferred from the Department of Economic Development and Transportation to the Intergovernmental Affairs Branch of the department. The division has also been renamed the "Sustainable Development" Division.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the Nunavut Planning Commission's Draft Land Use Plan was submitted to the Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on June 20, 2023. The standing committee is hopeful that the centralization of this function will expedite the review process.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2025-2026 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Do members have any general comments before we proceed to detailed questions? Seeing none, we'll now proceed to page-by-page review of the main statements starting on page B4. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs directorate, total operations and maintenance, \$4,819,000. Questions? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on the opening comments on the last page, I think it is, where the department's current main estimates for 2025 fiscal year is 19.936 million. My first question is: Does the department need all of that to function? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I ask that is that last year a million dollars was taken out of the budget, so if they need the total budget to fulfill their duties, what did not get done or what suffered last year when \$1 million was used to buy the senior vans when it was not budgeted for? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Premium Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: It was due to the vacancies that we had that we were able to reallocate for the initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are those vacancies filled now? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me just pull up our current vacancy rates throughout the whole department. Just give me a second to let me find the exact number.

Thank you. In this branch right now the vacancies that we have right now, I'll go through them for the member's benefit. In communications there's three vacancies, there's a senior communications officer, senior communications officer and then a communications officer. In the senior personnel secretariat, there's one vacancy, which is the chief administrator, senior personnel secretariat. In the corporate services there's two vacancies. There's a leave and attendance officer and then there's a manager, administrative services.

And then the new secretariat which we're hoping with the support of the members here would be the Elders Secretariat, and in there's director elders secretariat, senior advisor, another senior advisor, and then a senior advocacy analyst. Those are the positions that would be vacant right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll concentrate on the five staff that work under the premier. Are any of those vacant five staff that work directly under the premier vacant? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The press secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And how long has that position been vacant?

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I could get back to the member on the specific date. I don't recall specifically, but that function is being looked after right now by another staff member to ensure that that function is still continuing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has that position been vacant for more than a year or less than a year? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe it's within the year, but as I've already committed, I committed to getting back to the member on that specific date. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since that position has been vacant has it been advertised to try to fill? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we continue to look to fill that very important role. But as I've mentioned, currently we do have someone within the office that is filling that role, and so yes, it's something that we continue to want to fill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the premier wants to fill it, so can the premier give us a timeline of when he hopes to have that position filled. Is it being advertised currently as we talk? Just an update to the committee. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Typically as the member knows, these positions aren't typically advertised. I just wanted to mention that. And in terms of the timeline, as quickly as I can. We realize that the term left within in government as well that is something I'm hoping to fill that very important role. Thank you Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The premier is right it's not currently advertised, but it can be advertised it's totally up to the premier. Will this position be filled before the end of this Assembly? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I indicated, I do hope to fill that position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same page, the new Elders Secretariat, with Aging With Dignity Elders and Seniors Strategy, what exactly are the role of these new persons here? There's a lot of, I guess for lack of a better word, foot soldiers that are needed to helping take care of our elders and give them what they need. What are going to be the jobs of these new positions? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I couldn't agree more. We do need essential function to ensure that we provide the best necessary supports to our elders, as outlined in the strategy. The four new positions are the director for Elders Secretariat, the two senior advisor positions, and then the fourth one is a senior advocacy analyst. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These jobs, are they going to work with the, we get an idea of what actually they're going to do. Are they going to work with the departments to ensure that the elders are being treated fairly? If you can just enlighten the committee on the exact role of these senior positions that are being created. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I want to thank my colleague for those questions. Our intention is that this is just a start. This is just the beginning, realizing that we need that whole-of-government coordinated approach to ensure that we provide the implementation of the strategy.

To the member's question of the different roles, what will they be doing for the director, for the Elders Secretariat, to ensure that the Katujjiluta mandate commitments to elders are met, the director will be the Government of Nunavut's point of contact with elders for communications accountability and coordination.

The two senior advisor positions are to provide support to the executive director, to ensure there's oversight and coordination of strategic priorities, and to provide dedicated services and supports for elders. And then the analyst position is to help assess government policy options to ensure elders' interests have been considered. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you for the explanation. I want to get a clarification here. On the opening comments from the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations of Public Accounts, about half way down on the first page, it says:

The Elders and Seniors Strategy include a number of broad goals and objectives, including the introduction of a new requirement for all Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut as a condition of employment."

Is that true? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this is the ultimate goal. The objective is to really push forward the ability of Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut. So yes, that is the target and the goal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It says “as a condition of employment.” Just for clarity, then, if a government employee cannot speak Inuktitut, they will lose their employment? They will be fired or laid off? But they will no longer be employee of the Government of Nunavut if they can’t speak Inuktitut? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, the goal is to ensure that we provide the service for the public service to be able to learn. So it’s ambitious in terms of forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The premier says “ambitious”, but words do matter. It says here, “Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut as a condition of employment.”

A condition of employment. That implies if they don’t learn, they are no longer employed. So can the premier explain those words to Nunavummiut. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation) We have a goal. It’s a goal that we’ve identified and it’s not going to start right away, but we do have to start somewhere. That’s our future goal that we’re preparing for. We know that’s going to take a lot of work, but it’s a start. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those government employees that don’t speak Inuktitut, it’s not going to be right now, but when is it going to start? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. We had I think it’s 58, and it states that the Nunavut government, it was an Inuk vision to have the government running with Inuktitut as the working language. So we’re looking at training options and our goal. It’s our goal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Moving on to other matters; thanks for the explanation.

On the premier's opening comments, "our government remains committed to our obligations under article 32 of the Nunavut agreement, and EIA has an important role in fulfilling that obligation through the implementation of our Katujjiluta article 32 policy during the term of this government. We have coordinated with NTI to support their review of approximately 88 items."

My question is, currently are there any legal actions that are put on against the Government of Nunavut from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there are litigation issues between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. George Hickee): Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, can the premier enlighten the committee on how many and the reasons for the litigation? Not the outcome or details, just a number of the litigations and what they are about. Thank you.

Chairman: Premier Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the full complete list, but the ones that I do recall is the one on language, in terms of education being at the forefront. There's another one regarding PATA. My apologies to the interpreters on that acronym. It's the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*. And then the third one is arbitration on article 32. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I used an acronym, sorry.

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the agreement of cooperation was signed between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut, I would have thought maybe the legal actions would have been worked out through that agreement to cooperate. Has that had any effect on the legal actions that have been taken against the Government of Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I thank my colleague for his question. No, it doesn't impact the current court case. The Devolution Agreement, I think that's what the member is referring to, in terms of our willingness to be able to discuss and just

to listen on those issues. So those are two different parallel processes that are there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I'm not talking about devolution, it's an agreement that was signed in Cambridge Bay, an agreement to cooperate. So that agreement to cooperate that was signed in Cambridge Bay had no bearings on these legal action. Couldn't use that agreement to cooperate to work out disagreements that are being litigated against the Government of Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that clarification. My apologies. I thought you were leaning to that other conversation. But the partnership is something I really enjoyed with NTI. As I had mentioned in the House just a few days ago, I'm looking forward to heading to Arviat, actually, to meet with our partners at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and at that moment we are hoping to endorse very specific work plans where we hope to tackle common priority areas between NTI and the GN.

So that work is there, and those are really on common areas where we both agree we want to tackle the core issues to ensure that we continue to advance Nunavut's interests and Inuits' interests moving forward, but it has no bearing in terms of the different litigation.

We do hope that through this very important partnership role that we all show our willingness and ability to tackle the issues before we get into that disagreement. But yeah, there's no bearing to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm disappointed that the agreement that was signed to cooperate is not having more profound effects between the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, because generally if there's legal action taken by either party, the winners are the lawyers, and the longer it takes, the more the lawyers get. So I encourage the two to try to resolve these issues and work together more.

The premier lists off four different legal actions and he wasn't sure if there was more. Are there lots of issues, still legal actions that the premier can't name them all, or is there just a few more? Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premium Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I couldn't stress that we work very closely with NTI. I've been really pleased to be able to work with the new president Mr. Tunraluk on some really important issues, just in the few short months that he's been there. Most recently I was very proud to be able to sign what has been over 30 years outstanding in terms of the Nunavut implementation contract, and that required a tripartite agreement. For that I really wanted to recognize Mr. Tunraluk's leadership but our ability to be able to work very closely together. So the partnership committee has identified five key areas and there's more that we are exploring to work with, with Nunavut Tunngavik as we progress the relationship.

But to the member's question, there's just a few more. I had I believe committed to getting back. If I didn't commit to getting back to the member on the key specific ones I'll do it, through you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and this might be my last question; I'm not sure. But when the Devolution Agreement was signed it's a triparty that the Government of Nunavut signed, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated signed and the federal government signed. Were there any conditions placed on the Government of Nunavut or any obligations for NTI to sign the devolution agreement? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The one key area where Nunavut Tunngavik did bring was that PATA, and that's the conversation I had mentioned in terms of a table for the Government of Nunavut as well as NTI to have those conversations that are non-binding. We understand it is before the courts, but that doesn't prohibit that process. So it's a parallel process. That's really the only key area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: *Mat'na.* Just for clarity, then, the court process will keep going, or? There's an agreement the court process will cease for, sorry for the acronym, for PATA, since it's in the courts, but there were obligations or conditions that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated had asked for from the Government of Nunavut so? If we can just get an explanation on that. Thank you.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I had indicated, the discussions are non-binding and I was just made aware that the court hearing or the court case is currently scheduled to go to April of this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Next on my list is Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hate belabouring this point, but I still have questions on these elder vans. Prior to purchasing these vans was the minister provided cost estimates on the operation of them? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From recent media coverage, there was an amount that was quoted by one of the representatives of the company that's tasked with operating, and were provided these vans at no cost to them in the area of eight to nine hundred thousand dollars a year, which just on these five vans is 4 to 4.5 million dollars a year. I know we have the benefit of hindsight now, but I have to ask the minister: Would he still purchase these vans knowing it's going to cost four to four-and-a-half million dollars a year to operate? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that question. I really appreciate that. Has the program ran as good as we wanted? No. I think we all understand it's something we wanted to see very quickly. I would have loved to have seen it mobilize very quickly. We heard directly from the elders the urgency. It is their voices that I really felt.

In hindsight I wish we were able to move a lot quicker in terms of seeing that, and that's something as a leader, as a minister I take very seriously.

Was the initiative worth it? Absolutely. We heard from every community the importance of seeing investments around mobility issues. We've heard from elders about their dignity, feeling less not being able to just do basic chores of picking groceries or going to meetings, or when there's a picnic outside. So those really come to mind in terms of the sheer importance of this initiative.

I still think it's a very important initiative that was undertaken, but did it roll out the way I thought it would? No.

I still haven't seen the article that you've referenced. I know it was mentioned to me. I haven't had a chance to actually read the article. I haven't had a chance to review

(interpretation) whether it's correct or not, (interpretation ends) validate around that, but it is something I really feel in terms of the delay in terms of seeing the rollout of that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: There's an old saying, "haste makes waste" that I've heard, and yet I've yet to hear one single elder being brought to grocery shopping or brought to something they needed to get to. When we look at the *Financial Administration Act*, while not outright breaking it, we as regular members were not given an opportunity to discuss the funds. The funds as appropriated were not used as intended. As regular members we were not given an opportunity to question the minister or provide the minister an opportunity to substantiate this pilot project, created after the funds were appropriated and internally transferred.

Mr. Chairman, this is a prime example of some of the discussion we've had here today on why we go through such exercises as what we're doing, looking at project details, looking at associated policies before we approve funds in this House. I just I can't help but wonder – well, I know there wasn't enough thought put into this. There's elder vans existing here in Iqaluit already that are struggling for O&M money. Now there's two or three vans in town here, and how many are actually running?

When we talk about wasting resources and working with the limited monies we have, we have to think these things through. We have to make sure that they are going to be used as intended. None of these five vans have carried anyone yet. In a picture I saw one of them. But I don't see the value. I don't understand why the rush to do this.

We're up coming to our sealift season, up coming in the next few months. If this whole program could have been thought out better, vans purchased in the process of being purchased now with the associated policies, with funding locked in, these vans are susceptible to the weather. They are susceptible to vandalism now. I can't help but question why was this such a rush. There's so many other things in that Elders Strategy that needs to be worked on.

I understand mobility is an issue. I brought it up with the Minister of Family Services on hopefully that the minister had a chance to talk to you about people with disabilities being able to utilize these busses when they get on the road.

Frankly, I'm quite floored at the lack of planning for such a significant purchase with something that's going to hopefully have a significant impact some day, maybe.

I don't even have a question in there, Mr. Chairman. I think I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On that, I am still hopeful that the proponent will secure federal funding. I was made aware they were in the process of applying. I am still hopeful as well to see through partnership, through different levels of government, that we see the successful implementation of that. So I just wanted to comment on that. I am still hopeful. I know I indicated I wish it was a lot quicker and that it was running as intended, but yes, I'm remaining hopeful that the proponent will secure the funding for the operation and maintenance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): I have no more names on my list. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, of the discussions I just heard just now, with the communities with taxi service and the elder vans that are present in the communities with taxi services, would the minister agree with me to move those vans to communities with no taxi services for elders to utilize? That would be great for smaller communities with no taxi services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank my colleague for his question. These are the pilot programs we were hoping to learn from, so right now it is designated to those. The proponent, as I understand, has submitted funding requests for the operation and maintenance. So to be able to move it, that would be very challenging at this point.

I am hopeful that we will learn from this, as I indicated, that there would be a follow-up to be able to once we learn from the pilot. So it is through that that we would be hoping to see, to expand it to all the 25 different communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I'll speak in Inuktitut. The smaller communities that do not have taxi services don't have anyone, elders don't have anyone to take them around. And if they need to go somewhere, you have to pick them up. If the communities have the vans, the vans could be probably utilized, especially in the communities that do not have taxis and no one to take them around. You have to feel for the elders. I'm stating that as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: That's just a comment. I'll go on to my next name. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just going back to the question earlier about the dedicated, the six employees in the Elder Secretariat, I heard in one of the responses that one of the responsibilities I think for the senior advisors, the two senior advisors will be

to provide dedicated services and supports for elders. I would like to hear more about what that means. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate my colleague's question. Just for clarification, it's not six but it's four positions for that. But there are other two positions I think in the sustainable development which brings the four new PYs, just so that we're all on the same page.

Specifically to exactly what the senior advisors will do, if you'll allow, I'll get the deputy to be able to provide a bit more in depth in terms of the different engagements or different roles that they will have, through you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Fowler.

Ms. Fowler: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the member for the question. Just a bit of oversight on the senior advisor positions. They are intended to provide support to the director to ensure oversight and coordination of strategic priorities, and provide dedicated service and support for elders.

So just a little bit more on that is to ensure there's collaboration across all the departments for services that are provided to elders, that this is the one place that they can come to should they want clarification or need assistance for either accessing a service that the Government of Nunavut provides. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that response and I apologize for my math. I was actually staring at the number four, but maybe I was thinking about Bobby Orr.

One of the concerns that I have is that, for example, we have a team at health that works on home community care. It's a small team. I think three or four people, and we know a lot of elders are in need of home care. I wonder whether it's it might be better to stack a team that's doing front-line service instead of creating sort of more bureaucracy.

I agree that having one point of access for elders to call for information is really important information about services and what have you. However, what I do know is that those elders that do require something like home and community care and are having delays in accessing it would be better served by actually being cared for by health care professionals. So why this instead of that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a big echo here. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate the member's question. We heard directly from elders from the What We Heard document that I tabled here, that they really felt that they were being moved from one department to another to another agency, for funding applications or different challenges that they experienced. And so from that there's incredible work that's already happening in the departments, and you've listed one where I just want to just say a big thank you to the incredible public servants that do such a critical role in just about all communities, I believe, in terms of home care. I know Minister Main has been advocating to see if we could not enhance those services following the release of the strategy as well.

But there's programming at Qulliq Energy, Nunavut Housing Corporation has their own, Family Services has fuel programs. So we really saw that there's so many programs and so many different directions, and we felt that that central function was key.

I had indicated this is just the beginning. We feel bringing the resources together to ensure that we have a dedicated team that could be able to plug in to the different departments and agencies is going to be really beneficial, and we feel that with the director and the three other position supports around that, that's going to really build that foundation to really make a direct impact to the service delivery elders feel.

So we went with that central function for now, and I think this is going to be a great opportunity for us to reflect once we have the people, just the way we're seeing whether it's in stats bureau and others that play that central role and that central function. But I feel very confident that this will make an impact to the service delivery of our elders that have experienced those. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, premier, for that response. You listed off a handful of programs and departments that have elders programs. I'm just wondering specifically how many elder programs will this secretariat oversee and how many different departments are involved. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's something we'll have to get back to the number. It's going to be an exhaustive exercise but one we will have to do as we're hoping to get the support from members here.

On that exact list, I know we are already working with all the departments and agencies when we did the environmental scan of all the programs and services. But what we found was a lot of these were being done on the side of someone's desk, who already has a full-

time job of doing something as well. So a dedicated secretariat that primarily focuses specifically on being the advocates for elders within government is one. So to your point, I will have to get back to the member, through you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* (interpretation) so we will be expecting that. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Premier, for that. I am rather surprised that you don't have that information at hand, and having mentioned in your response that there were environmental scans done, I would think that the creation of the job descriptions and the job evaluations would have taken into account what those environmental scans say, because that gives an indication of the work that we're expecting these people to do. So again, I appreciate the commitment; however, I would rather have it now in this discussion.

My next question is whether or not the ability to speak Inuktitut is a condition of employment for those four positions, knowing that their key role and responsibility is to interact with elders on a daily basis, I guess, at work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would be a definite asset, but right now it's not mandatory. I know in the previous exchanges we are hoping to have goals to ensure and have the ability, that Inuktitut piece that was just discussed. But to your question, it would be a very strong asset and I agree with you the importance of having the ability to be able to speak Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun is so important. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Premier, is there a guarantee that at least one member of that unit will be able to speak Inuktitut fluently, or Inuinnaqtun, so that any elder that does call can speak to somebody in the language of their choice? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I thank my colleague for her question. Right now it is not a requirement, but I really hear the importance around that, so I could see what I could do in terms of if it's not within the four, that ability for that interpreter piece I think you're referring to, the ability for them to be able to communicate. Right now there's no requirement in the job descriptions for that, but it is something I could discuss with my deputy specifically, if it's not the job description what supports are going to be there to have that ability for Inuktitut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that's a really important commitment to make, to ensure that somebody in that unit does speak Inuktitut otherwise you can queue the questions from regular members in the next sitting.

I'll move on. The Aging With Dignity Elders and Senior Strategy was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 7, and one of the strategies goals and objectives is to reduce poverty among elders by establishing a guaranteed basic income to reduce poverty, which makes me really happy. What will be the annual amount of the guaranteed basic income and what is the approximate budget required to provide this support? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for that question. That is something I will be working, I would defer to the Department of Family Services, which I know is doing a lot of that great, important work and I know it was mentioned through minister statements around the work around that. But it's through that department that I would defer in terms of being the lead around that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Even in light of that response, I wonder if, Premier, if you can tell us at what age elders will become eligible for the guaranteed basic income program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this moment I will have to get back to the member specifically on that. I don't have that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask about the elders who are aging and elders in general. At the Legislative Assembly, it was last year on March 7, 2024, you tabled something. (interpretation ends) One of the strategies, goals, and objectives was to improve communication with elders by requiring our Government of Nunavut employees to learn Inuktitut as a condition of employment. What will be the minimum level of Inuit language proficiency required for employees to remain employed by the government? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my colleague for the question. I was glad to be able to announce that, to see how the whole government can help elders more. That's basically what the report states, that elders want to be able to speak Inuktitut to their government. Right now it's in the planning stage, and will be making announcements periodically and we will want the staff to develop their language skills.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the Inuit culture, it's fading. It seems to be fading, but those people who want to learn Inuktitut will learn Inuktitut. Only if a person wants to learn something can they learn something. Although they may not learn it right away they will eventually learn it. So if we're going to do that, it's the best thing to do in the job. If that's the plan for the future, then the people must learn how to speak Inuktitut.

I've been thinking that people who get jobs in the future, because it's the future of the government following what Inuit wanted. Maybe the question should start being asked: Do they want to learn Inuktitut? But if a person wants to learn, they can learn. If a person doesn't want to learn, like it can be applied to sewing, too. I can be a poor sewer at first, and then I can get really good and become very good at it.

So with the Inuktitut language, if they really want to learn it, then the government will start using it within the government. If there are two thoughts about it, then there will be nothing really running. So I wanted to talk with that here.

If anybody wants to learn, if they really like really want to learn, they can learn it. And if they try to learn and if they like it, then they can learn all of it. So I wanted to talk about that and I want people to hear me here.

People who want to learn can learn. People who don't want to learn will not learn. And those who cannot speak Inuktitut, they want to help people of Nunavut. I really believe that.

I don't really have a question on the matter, but it will be a step that can be taken. So wanting to use the Inuktitut language and wanting to learn how to speak Inuktitut, to speak Inuktitut to the ministers and to their deputy ministers and other agencies. Other agencies' staff and the ministers' staff. So learning how to speak Inuktitut will it be useful, will it affect anything, and will they have to use it at work, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for your comments. I believe I can respond. I believe there were three questions. Like, we all have a vision that will help Inuktitut to be spoken, and it's based on learning what we've talked about here. It has to progress and we have to do more about it. And we're looking more into it. So if the deputy minister should be able to speak Inuktitut, like you said, and I agree with it, and your last comment about different people who cannot speak English and people who cannot speak Inuinnaqtun, we will have to consider the ones that cannot speak those languages as well.

So your comments can be divided into three, although it was just a statement. I wanted to address it. We do have a vision to have all staff speak Inuktitut.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): It would be something to start off from. I really want to say something about this. The Inuktitut language, if it can be included, like at some point to have the whole government speak Inuktitut, that's a great vision. However, an Inuk or a white person, if they want to learn either language, they are able to learn the language. And the Inuktitut language, if it's just welcomed, that would be good enough for me, within the government as long as the language is welcomed. We cannot just keep pushing for it to be included. And there are Inuit who have not learned how to speak Inuktitut, although they want to work for the government or to become a leader, and I think we're having them miss the opportunity to get into the government. That's what I've been thinking.

We should take a good look at it and make some proper agreements about it. When people really want to get a job and then there is the fact that they will have to know how to speak Inuktitut, I believe we're just making things fall behind. We have to welcome the language properly. And all languages, like French, Inuinnaqtun, and Inuktitut should all be welcomed and work together. I believe that can be done here at the Legislative Assembly. I'm just trying to say something that people can feel. I hope I was understood. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. George Hicketts): I have no more names on my list on this page. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, directorate. Total operations and maintenance to be voted \$4,819,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Members please turn to page B5, strategic planning. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$3,920,000. Questions?

A Member: Agreed.

Chairman: Strategic planning, total operations and maintenance, \$3,920,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please turn to page B6, Nunavut cabinet. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$5,945,000. Questions? Not seeing any, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Nunavut cabinet, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$5,945,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page B7, Commissioner of Nunavut. Total operations and maintenance to be voted \$371,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page B8. All these numbers coming up under the Bs; somebody is going to call bingo soon. Intergovernmental Affairs. Total operations and maintenance, \$2,267,000. Questions? Seeing none, Intergovernmental Affairs total operations to be voted \$2,267,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to back to B9, Devolution Secretariat. Total operations and maintenance to be voted \$2,614,000. Questions? Devolution Secretariat, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$2,614,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please go back to page B3. Detail of expenditure to be voted, Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$19,936,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Brief closing comments, Premier.

Hon P.J. Akeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate the questions and the comments that were provided to me. We really take those suggestions, and we will get back to the comments that I said I would get back to you on.

I just want to recognize the incredible staff I'm so fortunate to be able to work with, day in and day out, and I think we've been able to do some really exciting work, whether it was devolution signing, or most recently the Nunavut implementation contract agreement, which I know have been long-standing at the department.

It really takes some incredible public servants to really push the vision that comes from here, from this room, to make things happen. And I'm lucky to have chief negotiator Mansell, Deputy Fowler as well as Mr. Atienza, but there are so many more that are at the department who are doing some incredible work.

We are a small department but a mighty department that supports the whole of government, and I couldn't be any prouder my team. I just want say thank you for the opportunity and your support as well, to continue. So *Qujannamiik*.

>>*Applause*

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses out. Members, I ask you to remain in your seats. We'll go directly to the next department. Thank you.

>>*Committee adjourned from 22:30 to 22:31*

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): I would like to ask Speaker Akoak, do you have officials you would like to have appear before the committee?

Speaker Akoak: We're just waiting.

Chairman: We'll wait for your officials to arrive. I would like to call this committee to order. I'll repeat. I would like to ask Speaker Akoak, do you have officials you would like to appear before this committee?

Speaker Akoak: Yes, I do, thank you.

Chairman: Does the committee to have Speaker's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials in. Speaker Akoak, please introduce your officials and proceed to your opening comments.

Speaker Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is Ms. Bennis (ph), Manager of Member Services, and to my left, Mr. Clerk. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to appear before you today to present the 2025-2026 main estimates of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

The Legislative Assembly's 2025-2026 main estimates reflect the financial and human resources required for the operation of the institution, as well as the offices of its independent officers.

We are requesting a total of \$32,064,000 in operations and maintenance funding for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. This represents an increase of \$1,881,000 from the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Approximately two-thirds of this increase is attributable to one-time funding for Elections Nunavut to administer the upcoming Seventh territorial general election, which is required by law to be held on October 27th of this year.

The Management and Services Board is in regular contact with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer regarding election readiness matters.

Consistent with past practice, I anticipate that I will be tabling this year's Dissolution Guidelines during the upcoming spring sitting. I also note that section 37 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act requires that an Independent Commission to Review Members' Indemnities, Allowances, Expenses and Benefits be established following the next territorial general election.

As Members are aware, we recently marked the 25th anniversary of the creation of Nunavut. I am pleased to note that following the recent Mace Tour to Kimmirut, Clyde River, and Qikiqtarjuaq, the Mace has now been to every community in Nunavut.

>>*Applause*

I wish to acknowledge and thank Her Honour the Commissioner for being a part of this initiative and presenting Commissioner's Awards to a number of Nunavummiut. I also anticipate that the Order of Nunavut Advisory Council will be issuing a call for nominations during the fall of this year.

I will be pleased to answer any questions members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Any comments before we proceed to detailed questions? I'll proceed to page-by-page review of the main estimates, starting on page A4. Assembly operations, total operations and maintenance \$10,279,000. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Good evening, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to your officials as well. We're still getting cut off with the Northwest Territories Assembly. We have our proceedings, still getting complaints or comments about it. Has the Assembly looked at perhaps live web stream specifically so that we don't get cut off, our constituents watching our proceedings? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik.* Speaker Akoak.

Speaker Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your question. We are still sharing a line with NWT at this moment but I don't know if there are any plans to go out on webstream. I can ask the clerk to answer the question for you. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Innuksuk, please proceed.

Mr. Innuksuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are sharing with Northwest Territories with one channel at this time and we're still utilizing it, but the Northwest Territories have stated that they have stated that they are no longer going to be airing their deliberations at the end of the fiscal year. So they will not be airing their proceedings, but we expect that we will be getting the full-time. But at this time we have not really discussed whether we will be using another channel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Total operations and maintenance, \$10,279,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page A5, expenditure on behalf of members. Total operations and maintenance, \$13,950,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page 6, Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly. Total operations and maintenance \$7,835,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page A3. Detail of total expenditures to be voted, total operations and maintenance to be voted, \$32,064,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Are members agreed Office of the Legislative Assembly is concluded?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Closing comments, Mr. Speaker, Tony Akoak.

Speaker Akoak (interpretation): Thank you very much. We are wanting to get the funds for the use for the Legislative Assembly and main estimates, and we will be using those funds to continue with our operations and maintenance. Thank you very much to our staff. Thank you.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out. Members, go to Bill 70 in your legislation binder. Bill 70, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026*. Clause 1, agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2, agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Go to schedule on page 2. Vote 1, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance, \$2,286,643,000. Total operations, \$2,286,643,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to clause 4. Clause 4, agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5, agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do committee agree to Bill 70 – clause 6, sorry. Clause 6, agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do committee agree to Bill 70 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Are we in agreement that Bill 70 is ready for third reading on the Orders of the Day?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to conclude this Bill?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: I'll report to Mr. Speaker.

>>*Committee adjourned at 22:45 and House resumed at 22:46*

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

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Malliki: Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 70 and would like to report that Bill 70 is immediately ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. Is there a seconder? Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok. The motion is carried.

Item 21, Third Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 70 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026 – Third Reading

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

Speaker: The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Members: Question.

Speaker: The question has been called. All those are in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried and Bill 70 is ready for assent.

>>*Applause*

Speaker's Statement

Speaker: Thank you. Before we proceed with the last item on the order paper, I wish to make a brief statement. As members are aware, today is Commonwealth Day. Our Legislative Assembly is a proud member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the House to the Governor General of Canada's official message on this occasion. Her Excellency stated:

“Commonwealth Day celebrates the enduring bonds that unite our diverse nations. This day is a moment to reflect on the strength we gain from working together in pursuit of a better future, and from addressing global challenges through cooperation and mutual respect.

In these times of global uncertainty, the role of the Commonwealth is more important than ever. I am hopeful that Commonwealth nations will continue to stand together for democracy, freedom, peace and security.”

I am confident that all members will join me in expressing appreciation for these very wise words.

With that, we'll move to item 22.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: With that we'll move onto item 22, Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Clerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will start at 10 tomorrow. March 11, *Orders of the Day*:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions

8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Tabling of Documents
13. Notices of Motion
14. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
15. Motions
16. First Reading of Bills
17. Second Reading of Bills
18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 43
 - Bill 50
 - Bill 64
 - Bill 67
 - Bill 68
 - Bill 69
 - Bill 70
 - Bill 71
 - Bill 72
19. Report of the Committee of the Whole
20. Third Reading of Bills
21. Orders of the Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 11, at 10:00 a.m. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 22:50*

APPENDIX – March 10, 2025



Nunavut Maligaliurvia
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Assemblée législative du Nunavut

Return to Oral Question

Asked by: Mr. Joeline Kaenerk, Member for Amittuq

Asked of: Honourable Margaret Nakashuk, Minister of Family Services

Number: 1149 – 6(2)

Date: March 4, 2025

Subject: New Community Learning Centre for Sanirajak

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to supplement an answer I provided to Mr. Jeolie Kaenerk, the Member for Amittuq.

I can confirm that Nunavut Arctic College's Capital Planner has not yet visited Sanirajak but is set to travel there in early April to assess the Community Learning Centre. An assessment visit is planned for Igloolik next week, and a third assessment visit to Kimmirut is planned for later this month.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.