

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. David Joanasié

(South Baffin)

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister responsible for Poverty Reduction; Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. David Akeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

Government House Leader; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College

Hannah Angootealuk
(Aivilik)

Edward Attagutaluk
(Aggu)

Hon. Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Hon. George Hickey
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Premier of Nunavut; Minister of Justice; Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut; Minister responsible for the Labour Standards Board; Minister responsible for the Human Rights Tribunal

Jamie Kablutsiak
(Arviat South)

Gordon Kautuk
(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Brian Koonoo
(Tununiq)

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

Simon Kuliktana
(Kugluktuk)

Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall
(Netsilik)

Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Hon. John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)
Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of Finance; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council; Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Board

Johnny Mike
(Pangnirtung)

Fred Pedersen
(Cambridge Bay)

David Porter
(Gjoa Haven)

Abraham Qammanié
(Amittuq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Alexander Sammurtok
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Hon. Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation; Minister responsible for Mines; Minister responsible for Trade

Hon. Annie Tattuineé
(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 16, 2026

Members Present:

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok, Ms. Hannah Angootealuk, Mr. Edward Attagutaluk, Hon. Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Jamie Kablutsiak, Mr. Gordon Kautuk, Hon. Brian Koonoo, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall, Hon. John Main, Mr. Johnny Mike, Mr. Fred Pedersen, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Abraham Qammaniq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Hon. Craig Simailak, Mr. Steven Taqtu, Hon. Annie Tattuinee.

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. David Joanasie): (interpretation): Before we begin, I would like to ask Mr. Attagutaluk to lead us in prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Attagutaluk, and good afternoon people of Nunavut and the people listening on the radio. Please welcome to the proceedings at the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Before we begin the proceedings, I would like to say especially Cape Dorset that there's going to be a burial and my thoughts are with the wife and family and the children. *Orders of the Day*, Item 2, Ministers' Statements. Mr. Hickes.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 42 – 7(1): Minister Absent from the House

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that the Hon. David Akeegoak will be absent for the House for the remainder of the sitting for personal reasons.

Mr. Speaker, during Minister Akeegoak's absence the following ministers will be acting for the following portfolios: I will continue to be acting Government House Leader; Premier Main will be Acting Minister of Education; and Ms. Healey Akearok will be Acting Minister of Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Qulliq Energy Corporation Ms. Healey Akearok.

Minister's Statement 43 – 7(1): Recognizing QEC Front-line Workers

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, today I will recognize the dedication and professionalism of Qulliq Energy Corporation's (QEC) front-line employees, who work tirelessly to ensure reliable power for Nunavummiut.

These employees are highly skilled professionals who operate and maintain complex power systems in some of the most challenging conditions in Canada. They work in extreme cold, high winds, and limited daylight, often at irregular hours and with little notice, to keep communities powered and safe. Their commitment goes well beyond technical expertise; it reflects a deep sense of responsibility to the people they serve.

Mr. Speaker, when outages occur or equipment fails, Qulliq Energy Corporation's front-line teams respond immediately. Whether restoring power in the middle of the night, repairing lines during severe weather, or ensuring generators continue to run during prolonged storms, these employees consistently put community needs first. In doing so, they demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and professionalism under pressure.

Mr. Speaker, these employees are often unseen, but their impact is felt in every home, school, health centre, and business across the territory. Their willingness to work where conditions are toughest, and when the work is most critical, makes them an essential part of Nunavut's energy system.

I ask my colleagues in this House to join me today in thanking Qulliq Energy Corporation's front-line workers for their dedication, skill, and service. Their work keeps Nunavut powered, connected, and moving forward.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 44 – 7(1): Airbus A-350 Cold Weather Test Campaign

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this winter, as in many winters in the past, the Iqaluit Airport has been pleased to host cold-weather testing for some of the world's largest and best-known aircraft manufacturers.

This year, Airbus brought their A350-900 Series in to complete the testing of some modified components. The European manufacturer has made Iqaluit a regular stop in

their certification trials, including for all of the major airframes they have developed over the last 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, following Airbus' campaign in February, we also hosted a crew from Gulfstream, testing new fuel systems for installation in their Gulfstream 800.

This most recent set of cold weather trials confirms Iqaluit International Airport as the premiere cold weather test centre for the world's aircraft manufacturing industry.

Mr. Speaker, these tests are not only interesting to aviation buffs, they make an important contribution to aviation safety, by providing real-world conditions.

Mr. Speaker, winter is not yet over here in Nunavut. We may still see an opportunity to host another test before spring arrives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Mr. Koonoo.

Minister's Statement 45 – 7(1): Wolf Sample Collection Program

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that my department has continued to support Nunavut harvesters through our Wolf Sample Collection Program.

This program compensates local hunters for harvesting wolves and providing samples and location data. It was initially launched in 2018 in the Kitikmeot Region, and was expanded territory-wide in 2019. The program provides hunters \$500 per wolf across all of Nunavut, and \$900 per wolf in areas of special concern, such as the Bathurst, Bluenose-East and Dolphin-Union caribou herds' ranges.

The goal of this program is to support active harvesting in Nunavut through providing increased financial opportunities for harvesters. I am pleased to announce that a total of \$278,700 in wolf sample collection payments have been paid to Nunavut harvesters so far, since April 1, 2025, representing the submission of 476 wolf samples to the department.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment remains committed to continue enhancing support for active harvesting in Nunavut through avenues such as the Wolf Sample Collection Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Simailak.

Minister's Statement 46 – 7(1): Memorandum of Understanding – Critical Minerals

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform members that the Government of Nunavut has joined western and northern premiers in signing a memorandum of Understanding to advance the development of a Western Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy. This is a strategic and forward-looking step.

Critical minerals are essential to the modern world. They power clean energy technologies, strengthen supply chains, support food security, enable advanced manufacturing, and play an increasingly important role in national security. Western and northern Canada holds some of the world's most promising mineral potential. Nunavut is central to that future. But potential alone is not enough.

Across the west and north, we face common challenges including limited transportation corridors, seasonal marine access, energy constraints, and the high cost of infrastructure in remote regions. No single jurisdiction can address these challenges alone.

This memorandum of understanding creates a framework for collaboration among British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. Together we will develop a regional strategy focused on infrastructure planning, value chain development, and coordinated advocacy to the federal government.

For Nunavut, this is about ensuring that Arctic and northern priorities are not an afterthought, but are embedded from the beginning. It is about advancing marine corridors, ports, energy generation and transmission, and the enabling infrastructure required for responsible resource development in our territory.

It is also about ensuring that development reflects Inuit societal values and strengthens economic reconciliation. Inuit partnership, participation, and leadership must be foundational to any critical mineral strategy that includes Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, this memorandum of understanding is non-binding. It creates no financial commitments and no legal obligations. It does not affect our responsibilities under the Nunavut Agreement. Any future initiatives arising from this work will return to cabinet and to this Assembly for appropriate consideration.

What it does is position Nunavut at the table, shaping regional priorities rather than reacting to them.

By working together, western and northern jurisdictions can strengthen Canada's role as a reliable and responsible supplier of critical minerals to global markets. We can align infrastructure planning, improve investment certainty, and advocate collectively for federal support where it is most needed. Nunavut's voice matters in that conversation.

Our geography matters.

Our resources matter.

Nunavummiut matter.

This collaboration ensures that Arctic leadership is part of Canada's critical minerals future.

Ma'ina, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Member responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Lyall.

Minister's Statement 47 – 7(1): Canada – Nunavut Housing Benefit – Homeowner Support Stream

Hon. Cecile Lyall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House of an important program that is providing direct, meaningful support to homeowners in Nunavut. The Canada-Nunavut Housing Benefit helps make housing more accessible and affordable. The program includes four streams:

- support for private market renters;
- community housing renters;
- survivors of gender-based violence;
- and most recently, homeowners.

The Homeowner Support Benefit stream was launched in December 2025 and it provides eligible homeowners with up to \$600 per month to help reduce the ongoing costs of owning a home in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the uptake in this program has been encouraging. Since the program launched, 208 applications have been received, and as of this month, 139 households have been approved and are now receiving this benefit.

Homeownership is one of the most meaningful steps a family can take toward long-term stability and independence. Our government wants to see more Nunavummiut own their homes, build equity, and put down roots in their communities. The Homeowner Support Benefit helps to make that vision a reality by providing direct support to homeowners, reducing financial pressures, and making homeownership more achievable and sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation administers the Homeowner Support Benefit stream and is working to ensure Nunavummiut are aware of the program and supported in applying for it.

Nunavummiut who wish to learn more can visit the Nunavut Housing Corporation website or call 1-844-413-9355 for assistance. I encourage all members of this House to share this news throughout their communities as well.

Quana, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Healey Akearok.

Minister's Statement 48 – 7(1): Learning and Communities

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Arctic College is proud of its presence in the territory. This presence is seen through its facilities located across the territory and through the programs we offer using diverse delivery models. Most importantly, the College's presence is seen through the students who come to learn in our programs.

The Nunavut Arctic College strives to provide quality learning experiences, whether it is hands-on or in the classroom, whether it is in Inuktitut or English, whether it is a preparatory course or a degree program, the College hopes that students see themselves and their communities learning. It is also the College's hope that students take their learning with them into their communities.

Earlier this year, the City of Iqaluit shared a message of thanks to the students of the College's Fur Production and Design program. The Iqaluit firefighters received some new patches for their outer gear and needed support in sewing them on. A request was made to the Fur Production and Design team to provide this support, and the request was agreed to. The patches were sewn on and returned to the Iqaluit firefighters.

Although a small gesture, it is one of many small gestures that connect our community together. This gesture was the result of individuals in our community recognizing the

skills and knowledge held by others and it represents a mutual respect for service provided by people in different spaces. It represents a tangible expression of appreciation and thanks.

I want to thank the Fur Production and Design students for continuing their efforts in hands-on learning, and for always being willing to use that learning for the benefit of others. I greatly respect the work of seamstresses, designers and everyone who creates for warmth and care. Thank you for sharing your skills with the broader community.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mister Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 49 – 7(1): Inuktitut on the Canada Revenue Agency Website

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues and people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share that the Taxes and Benefits for Indigenous Peoples website is now available in Inuktitut on the Canada Revenue Agency's website.

This is an important step in improving access to tax and benefit information for Inuit communities. It is also encouraging to see Inuktitut become the first Indigenous language available on this section of the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Originally launched in 2021 in English and French, the webpage helps Indigenous Peoples learn about filing taxes, accessing benefits and credits, and programs available to their communities.

(interpretation ends) The new Inuktitut page includes information on benefits and credits, including the Inuit Child First Initiative. It also provides details about services available through northern service centres in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, and Iqaluit, and guidance tailored to Inuit communities.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative supports efforts to improve inclusion and accessibility. It also aligns with commitments under the *Indigenous Languages Act*, the Canada Revenue Agency's Indigenous Strategy, and the Inuit Nunangat Policy.

Improving access to information in Inuktitut helps ensure Inuit families can better understand and access the programs and benefits available to them.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Ms. Brewster.

Minister's Statement 50 – 7(1): Medical Travel Policy and Support

Hon. Janet Brewster: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to speak about a service impacting nearly every family in Nunavut, medical travel, and to share information for when they experience what can be a challenging and emotional part of their healthcare journey.

Mr. Speaker, The Department of Health is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Medical Travel Policy, focusing on clarity, consistency, and responsiveness to the needs of Nunavummiut. The review examines several key areas, including streamlining the structure of the policy, clearly defining escort eligibility and responsibilities, as well as reducing the number of appeals by making the process easier to navigate.

In addition, Health is expanding virtual care, increasing oral health promotion and prevention, and growing general anaesthetic dental services. The establishment of regional long-term care centres and the upcoming Aqquasariaq Trauma Treatment Centre will also help ensure Nunavummiut can receive that care closer to home.

To help guide this, Health developed the *Nunavut Medical Travel Handbook*. This resource is available online and provides guidance and clear information to help Nunavummiut navigate medical travel with confidence.

Mr. Speaker, Medical Travel staff also work closely with airlines, boarding homes, and healthcare providers to ensure Nunavummiut receive the care they need. We encourage you to contact Medical Travel for guidance, support and to provide feedback if your travels are impacted by weather or mechanical delays and appointment changes.

Medical Travel staff are available 24 hours a day, at these numbers:

In the Qikiqtaaluk Region: 1-866-371-3305;

In the Kivalliq Region: 1-844-886-8020;

In the Kitikmeot Region: 1-844-886-8010.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is to support Nunavummiut through every step of their medical travel journey. By working together and through communication, we can help ensure that medical travel remains safe, respectful, and grounded in the values of our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item number 3, Members' Statements. Member's Statement, Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 54 – 7(1): Arctic Winter Games Athletes

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to congratulate all the individual athletes and teams that returned to Nunavut with medals. We are all proud of you.

We are also proud to have heard that team Nunavut shares a Hodgson Trophy award with Team Alberta North, and this tie being the first for the games. That award is given in the sportsmanship, friendship, and fair play. For this you all deserve a pat on the back, because you represented Nunavut with honour.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, I would like to congratulate my nephew's son and his teammates in winning the bronze medal in Under 18 Volleyball. His family normally resides in Kugluktuk; however, they have been living here in Iqaluit for the past two years, as his father is taking the environmental technology program at Nunavut Arctic College. Ry (ph) Pedersen, you have carried the family name well and made us all proud. Your great-grandmother is very happy and I'm sure your great-grandfather is, too, as he looks down from above.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my grandson Kieran Day Aliqamnuq (ph), who is now 23, a happy belated birthday for yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North, Mr. Kablutsiak. Arviat South, I'm sorry.

Member's Statement 55 – 7(1): Long Time Career Patsy

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to congratulate a long-time employee who has shown hard work, dedication, and passion in serving Nunavummiut. I want to congratulate my mother-in-law, Patsy Kautak Uksuk (ph), who recently retired from Nunavut Housing Corporation on Friday, March 13, 2026.

Throughout her career at NHC, Patsy, accomplished many challenges so that Nunavummiut may have a place to call home of their own under public units with LHOs. Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s, Patsy had shown her dedication to helping students graduate within their own homes, starting with which at that time it was known as Eskimo Point, where she advocated for education to be delivered in Arviat rather than having to leave home to complete grade 12, as Patsy didn't want her son Kelly (ph) to leave for high school. Soon after, other communities followed with having education K to 12. She changed the plan, as a parent, being away from parents age 13 and 14, so Patsy fought for high school. Mr. Speaker, Patsy had devoted her time to NHC throughout her career. Her colleagues describe her as the mother of housing corp, which she helped build.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate team Nunavut female U19 hockey team on winning the bronze medal Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse, Yukon.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, I want to name the two female hockey players that were part of the team and they are Joan Savikataaq of Arviat, who currently placed for Ontario hockey academy with the junior varsity team in Cornwall, Ontario; and Ashleigh Ollie of Arviat, who currently plays for Notre Dame Hounds, with Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the topic of hockey, I'm extremely proud of how the residents of Arviat have come together on entering the Kraft Hockeyville 2026 for Arviat's King arena, when the arena was named after the late Ralph King in Arviat. The announcement was made Saturday March 14, 2026 that Nunavut's community was selected for the region of Kivalliq, which is in Arviat.

Mr. Speaker, I will read parts of the article that was published on Saturday, March 14, but before I do I seek unanimous consent.

Speaker: Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement today. Are there any nays? Hearing none, Mr. Kablutsiak, proceed.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“Kraft Hockeyville announces Provincial, Territorial winners for 2026.” Arviat Nunavut King arena is listed. “What's Next”:

“The next phase of the Kraft Hockeyville 2026 begins on March 21, 2026, when the Top 2 finalists will be announced. Canadians will then have the final say in deciding the 2026 winner through public voting at krafthockeyville.ca from April 3 to 4. The Kraft Hockeyville 2026 champion will be revealed live on Hockey Night in Canada on April 4, 2026. As part of the Top 2 prize structure:

- “The runner-up will receive \$100,000 for rink upgrades.
- “The Kraft Hockeyville 2026 winning community will receive \$250,000 for rink upgrades, plus the opportunity to host an NHL Pre-Season game for their community.

“Canadians can visit Kraft hockeyville.ca and follow @krafthockeyville on Instagram to learn more and follow along as the competition continues to celebrate the heart and hometown pride that define Kraft Hockeyville.”

Hopefully I didn’t go off side in providing details. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members’ Statements. You didn’t go offside, Member Colleague, but I will remind members to stick to one main topic area when you are doing your member’s statement. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Member’s Statement 56 – 7(1): Child and Family Services Improvements

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to people of Pangnirtung and everyone in Nunavut. We hear Ministers’ Statements on things that they need to announce and the Ministers’ Statements outline. I like the way they do it.

But I would like to make one statement about Ministers’ Statement from the Minister for Nunavut Housing Corporation about a statement that the minister made to the House. There have been concerns about Child and Family Services, and it was explained very clearly how they are monitored by the Auditor General, especially with children and adoptions and other matters. The minister wanted to make sure that everything runs well with those things, and the minister explained to the House that the Auditor General of Canada’s recommendations in regards to Family Services within the Nunavut government, the minister described it about the minister will follow the recommendations and that they will use them to improve Family Services’ service delivery.

Mr. Speaker, our children, our grandchildren even, they need to be very carefully monitored to make sure that they stay safe, and have food security and be taken well care of. And the Minister Akearok explained it and I was very happy to hear it. It sounds like our children will be in a safer place, from the way the Department of Family Services is now going to be administering their services. I was very happy to hear it. That’s why I’m standing up about it today. It has become quite obvious that there will be some very important improvements to Family Services department.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Member Statement. Member for Uqsuqtuuq, Mr. Porter.

Member's Statement 57 – 7(1): Community Morgues

Mr. Porter (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the people from Kitikmeot.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a long-standing issue for the community of Gjoa Haven.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that every Nunavut community should have adequate morgue facilities. Information published by the government concerning Gjoa Haven's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan indicates that the municipality has been working hard on this issue. The information indicates that:

“Establishing an adequate morgue is an urgent and long-standing priority for the community. The municipal council is concerned that the existing facility does not meet basic requirements, either structurally or for the respectful and safe handling of the deceased. Currently the morgue, a 15 foot by 10 foot building, is extremely small, sits on CGS property, and is in need of major interior and exterior repairs. It is essentially a storage shack, with no cooling technology that poses health and sanitation risks in warm weather.

“There is no electricity or heat for the building, requiring nursing staff and families to deal with freezing temperatures, and use flashlights or lanterns in the morgue. Families also lack an appropriate space for visitation, leading to a diminished sense of respect, increased grief, and over even deeper sense of loss. The present morgue situation is causing more hardship than necessary.

“Last year, the hamlet carried out a study to identify what at minimum is needed to meet standards and fundamental needs, such as lighting, cooling, installation of a visitation area, security measures, along with estimated costs, potential funding sources and jurisdictional authorities involved.”

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Porter.

Mr. Porter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues.

“The overall minimum investment was estimated at \$100,000, and the findings were shared with relevant partners. Since then, we have made progress on the option of acquiring this ‘surplus warehouse’ from the Government of Nunavut, and subdividing the lot, so that the land it sits on can be considered municipal land.

“Community Services and Transportation and Infrastructure employees are supporting us to move this ahead. However, they have also identified that there is asbestos in the building, which also needs to be remediated, and will likely add to the costs of this crucial project. Council ranks this project as one of the top priorities for the community and calls for swift and coordinated action with partners having jurisdiction over the site.”

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the municipality of Gjoa Haven and I will have questions for the appropriate minister at the appropriate time.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you as well. Members’ Statements. I have no most more names on my list. Item number 4, Return to Oral Questions. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Question 21 – 7(1): The Role of Elders in Community Justice Committees

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide some supplemental information to a question asked by MLA from Aivilik, March 10, 2026, number 21-7(1), on the role of elders in community justice committees.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to supplement answers I provided to the MLA from Aivilik on the roles of elders on community justice committees.

Elders play an essential role in community justice committees, offering cultural guidance, traditional knowledge, and mentorship to youth and adults who are at risk and involved in the Restorative Justice Diversion Program.

Once Elders and other individuals are appointed to a community justice committee, the Department of Justice provides them with comprehensive training. The training covers the criminal justice system, the restorative justice processes, the importance of addressing the underlying causes of criminal behaviour, and the role and responsibilities of the community justice committee.

Additionally, the local community justice outreach worker provides the justice committees with ongoing operational support. This includes coordinating meetings between the committee and offenders, managing reporting requirements, and conducting follow-up on diversion cases to ensure that all processes are completed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Following the public call issued in December 2025, the Department of Justice continues to receive inquiries and applications from across the territory from individuals interested in joining a community justice committee. The review of submissions and appointing new members are still ongoing. To date, no community members from Coral Harbour or Nauyasat have expressed interest or submitted their names for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the department remains open to applications for justice committee members from these and other communities, and will continue its outreach efforts as the process moves forward.

To encourage the involvement of Elders, the local Community Justice Outreach Workers meet with them in person and reach out to former committee members. Pamphlets about justice committees are also available in all four official languages to encourage participation. When an elder expresses interest, the community justice outreach worker helps them throughout the application process, in English or Inuktitut, to ensure the process is accessible and culturally appropriate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item number 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Aggu, Mr. Attagutaluk.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Attagutaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge Moses Iqqaqsaq. He's my CA in Igloodik and his wife, Gloria Iqqaqsaq. As I stated, they came here. I made a statement that he was medevacked here. He's well now, and he's ready to go home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item number 5, Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a visitor to the gallery, Gabriel-Antoine Côté, who is an advisor to the Nunavut operations at Agnico Eagle Mines. Mr. Speaker, Gabriel is no stranger to the territory, having more

than 15 years of experience working in Nunavut. His work focuses on government relations, stakeholder engagement, major development projects, and business initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, our government values our relationships with mining operators and the economic benefits that mining activity contradicts for our territory.

I would like to welcome Gabriel-Antoine to the gallery today, and thank him and Agnico Eagle for our continued partnerships. I look forward to meeting with him in the coming days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the gallery. And to Nunavut. Also anyone who's willing to visit the gallery you are much welcome. Item number 6, Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Kuliktana.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Oral Question 44 – 7(1): Caribou Management in the Kitikmeot

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Environment in the area of caribou management in the Kitikmeot.

As the minister will be aware, his department issued a news release in September 2025 announcing the signing of an updated memorandum of understanding with the Government of the Northwest Territories concerning the management of shared populations of caribou herds.

The announcement indicated that the two governments would be working together on a number of subjects, including an “agreement to share data and information collected during monitoring activities and projects relating to caribou.”

Can the Minister confirm whether or not the Memorandum of Understanding has been shared with the Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization, and will the minister commit to tabling a copy of the updated memorandum of understanding in the Legislative Assembly before the end of our current winter sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and also thank you to the member for his question. The MOU has been signed, Kugluktuk (interpretation ends) There is a memorandum of understanding from March 25. That was Transportation and

Infrastructure in August 2021, and I don't think that is the right one. I would like to find out and ask the member the memorandum of understanding he asked about.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Member for Kugluktuk, please ask your question again.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. His department issued a news release September 2025 announcing the signing of an MOU between Government of Nunavut and the Government of the NWT concerning the management of shared population of caribou herds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am unable to provide a response to the member, so I will provide a response on a later date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. This question is marked as notice and I'll move on to the next member. Member for Mr. Pedersen.

Oral Question 45 – 7(1): Beer and Wine Store for Cambridge Bay

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission. As he is aware, the residents of Cambridge Bay voted by plebiscite to have the Government of Nunavut open a beer and wine store in Cambridge Bay. This was seven years ago, Mr. Speaker. To date there is no beer and wine store, and no notices from the government or the commission on when one will open.

The main reason for opening one was to curb the illegal sales of high-content alcohol by bootleggers. Cambridge Bay is a community that has no alcohol restrictions, other than the requirement for a permit.

Since the commission took over the permit application system, which once used to be privatized, it can take days to a week to get a response on a permit application. We used to get a permit in a matter of minutes when it was privatized. This delay in getting permits is frustrating for residents, and in today's digital age it is unacceptable.

Can the minister update me on the progress being made as to when the commission will open a beer and wine store in Cambridge Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for the Liquor and Cannabis Commission, Mr. Main.

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

(interpretation ends) The Government of Nunavut and Liquor and Cannabis Commission are working to encourage responsible drinking practices, and to disrupt bootleggers, and we do see the liberalizing access to low alcohol beverages like beer, wine, ciders and coolers through our stores as part of that effort.

With regard to Cambridge Bay right now, there is no specific timeline as to when a store could be established in the community. However, we are learning from the existing stores in Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit, and monitoring activity at those stores closely with an eye to developing a plan for Cambridge Bay. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his response. If space is the issue, then all the commission needs to do is put out a request for proposals requesting it. To date there have been no RFPs posted in the community.

If a new way of operating a beer and wine store is the desire then all the commission needs to do is advertise that, although I don't know why any new way would be required when the GN is already profiting between two and four million dollars per year from the two commission-operated stores in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. Surely the profit generated from a third beer and wine store in Nunavut would likely fund the operations, or at least a large part of it, of the soon-to-be-opened healing centre.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the minister when residents in Cambridge Bay can expect to receive notice from the commission when they are planning to issue a request for proposals from businesses in Cambridge Bay to supply space to a commission so that they can open a beer and wine store in Cambridge Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for alcohol and substances, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) and I thank the member for the question. I understand that the community may be anticipating some news or some word on this initiative. I understand it has been quite some time since the plebiscite was held in the community back in 2017, that showed strong support through that vote in terms of opening a store.

Right now the commission is looking alternate different options, different models under which a store could be brought to the community. The options that we're looking at include a full distribution centre with a retail store, looking at a smaller-focused retail

store, or having a private owned business operate as an agent on behalf of the commission. Those are the options that are being looked at, and we hear from the community that there is still interest in having something established in that community. We are being informed by the desires of the community to see something move forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Second and final question, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and again, I thank the minister for his reply.

We're all aware of the sealift schedule, where if you want items to arrive in sealift which comes into Cambridge Bay in late August or early September each year, you must have your orders submitted by early June. This is only a couple months away.

It is evident that Cambridge Bay will not have access to a beer and wine store by this fall, and if a suitable building is not found or constructed soon, it is becoming evident that one will not be opening next year, either.

A flat of beer, 24 cans, in Iqaluit or Rankin Inlet can be purchased for less than \$90 and can be purchased five days per week. In Cambridge Bay the cost is upwards of \$120 for that same flat of beer. However, we must plan in advance, as first we can wait up to a week to get a permit; after that we call the liquor store, which is normally in Yellowknife, as ordering from anywhere else we will cost much more in freight, and would cost closer to \$150-plus for the same flat of beer. Once we pay the liquor store we wait of a day or two for them to deliver it to Canadian North for shipping to Cambridge Bay. Once the cargo carrier receives it, it can take up to another week for them to ship it to the community.

Mr. Speaker, this is about a two week period before we receive our order and we are forced to pay more for because we have no local outlet – again, which was approved by plebiscite seven years ago.

I am glad to hear that Canada is working on a new free trade between provincial and territorial borders, as this may negate the requirement to pay for a permit, which would lower the cost, although just a small bit, because it's the freight cost which is what drives the price up for us.

Can the minister commit to working with the business community of Cambridge Bay to see what they have available or what they could construct, so that the beer and wine store could be made available for the residents of Cambridge Bay in the not-too-distant future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for raising this issue. As part of the options work that the commission is working on in terms of looking specifically in Cambridge Bay and what model would work best, yes, I can commit to having the commission work with business community in Cambridge Bay. I thank the member for the question. *Mat'na*.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Oral Question 46 – 7(1): Community Health needs Assessment Projects

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health, related with Community Health Needs Assessment Project.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the minister for her recent correspondence to me concerning the new community health needs assessment project that her department is undertaking in Arviat, Igloolik, and Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, her letter to me indicated that:

“In addition to health data statistics, community consultations are being held to assess health needs from the community’s perspective.”

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this project, and can she indicate when a final report from the assessment is expected to be shared with the community and tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Health, Ms. Brewster.

Hon. Janet Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just did a quick search here and I don't have the timeline for when that assessment is going to be complete. I will continue to look for that answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An ongoing concern in Arviat is the need for more indeterminate nurses at our health centre.

In the long-term, I am hopeful that the new Inuit Nunangat University in Arviat will work closely with Nunavut Arctic College to offer programs to help more Inuit get the education and training needed to become fully certified nurses.

As the minister will be aware, the government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that less than half of the Department of Health's positions in Arviat are filled. The report indicates that there are 20 vacancies.

Can the minister describe how her department's Community Health Needs Assessment Project will address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Health, Minister Brewster.

Hon. Janet Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that the community health needs assessment should be available and wrapped up in the summer time. Mr. Speaker, anytime that we look closely into the realities of health care delivery and how we are staffed and what programs are running, that informs how we understand how much we should be putting into staffing levels at community health centres. We look at all sorts of different data sets that can help us to improve our health care service delivery, and the health care needs assessment will be a very informative part of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Second and final supplementary, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our community's health care priorities is an expansion of the existing health centre in Arviat. As the minister will recall, her predecessor informed the Legislative Assembly during its sitting of October 31, 2024, that an expansion of the Arviat health centre is planned to be undertaken following the completion of the Baker Lake and Kugluktuk replacement projects.

Can the new minister confirm her department's current timeline for expansion of the Arviat health centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Brewster.

Hon. Janet Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of repairs that are taking place, modifications. The reception area, flooring and painting repairs as well as the entrance ramp. We know that that's been a major issue for a lot of Arviatmiut. Getting up that steep slope is not very easy. So that's part of the modification and upgrades. I believe the chimneys will also be upgraded, and the anticipated start of that construction is this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Aivilik MLA, Ms. Angootealuk.

Oral Question 47 – 7(1): Youth and Elders Committees Grant Program

Ms. Angootealuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Culture and Heritage, and they concern the department's Youth and Elders Committees Grant Program. (interpretation) My apologies, I have a bit of a cold.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I understand and recognize that the department's Youth and Elders Committees Grant Program provides funding to support activities that pass on *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* from our elders to the younger generation.

Mr. Speaker, the department's approved 2025-2026 business plan indicated that one of the department's priorities for 2025 was to "plan and deliver grants and contribution information session in a Kivalliq community."

Can the Minister confirm which Kivalliq community this grants and contribution session took place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Culture and Heritage, Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Elders Grant Contribution funded 18 projects related to elders' engagement and will be in care for 2025-2026. I'm trying to find out which regions across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary, Ms. Angootealuk.

Ms. Angootealuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the department for its important work to fund youth and elders' activities. Can the minister confirm how many communities received funding from this grant program during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Culture and Heritage minister, Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have the papers here regarding that. The 23 communities that are listed: Igloolik, Pond Inlet, Kugluktuk, Taloyoak, Rankin Inlet, Kugaaruk, Arviat, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Iqaluit, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, Rankin. (interpretation ends) From the previous years, from 2025, one is Baker Lake. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Second and final supplementary, Ms. Angootealuk.

Ms. Angootealuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this opportunity to encourage my constituents in Coral Harbour and Nauyasat to consider applying for this grant program.

Can the minister confirm how many proposals have been submitted to his department under its Youth and Elders' Committees Grant Program during the current 2025-2026 fiscal year, and can he confirm how many have been approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a good question, and thank you for asking the question. To give a prompt response, I cannot give a response at this time, but I will return the question.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Mr. Porter.

Oral Question 48 – 7(1): Committee Morgues

Mr. Porter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Community Services. As the minister will recall, I made a statement earlier today concerning the need for adequate morgue facilities in the community of Gjoa Haven.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of his department's response to Gjoa Haven's situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of community affairs, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question regarding the department's work with community of Gjoa Haven with regard to securing a new morgue or renovating it.

Morgues are a sensitive emotional issue for all communities. We do want to take care of our dearly beloved that we've lost, and the department does continue to work with the hamlet to see what can be done. I do know it has been an ongoing issue.

Currently the community of Gjoa Haven is ranking high on the list for work around a morgue facility, and that is where the project is right now with the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary to your question, Mr. Porter.

Mr. Porter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the answer. Gjoa Haven's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan also indicates that:

“Linked to the morgue project is the urgent need to improve the management and operation of our cemetery, and potentially identify a new location. Until recently, community members have been required to dig the graves for their families, and the municipality did not take an active role in being responsible for the cemetery. A committee is being established for ‘respectful burials and handling of the deceased.’ This is a critical project impacting community mental health and well-being.”

Can the minister describe what support is available from his department to municipalities in the area of cemetery management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for his question. Each community, each municipality will be able to use, access their municipal capital block funding program to go towards cemetery maintenance and work around that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Porter.

Mr. Porter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the answer. Mr. Speaker, I believe that all Nunavut communities should have adequate morgue facilities.

As the minister will recall, correspondence from his predecessor was tabled in the House during the previous Legislative Assembly on this issue. The letter indicated that:

“The department continues to work closely with municipalities, as well as the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services, regarding the management of morgues and the respectful handling of the deceased.”

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

Speaker: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. The Department of Community Services has been working on this for a number of years now, and actually, I would like to thank my predecessor for working on this subject for a number of years now.

We do want to look at all the cemeteries and morgues across our territory and our communities. In November 2024 we were approved through the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada for this type of work to be included in the

Canada Community Building Fund. They are doing a workshop in Ottawa, so we will continue to work on looking at their cemeteries and morgues across the territory to see what kind of improvements can be made and should be made. Hopefully it will meet the needs of each different community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Oral Question 49 – 7(1): Airport Infrastructure

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are in regards to of airport infrastructure and I will direct my questions to the Minister of Transportation concerning the subject of airport infrastructure.

As the minister will recall, the Government of Nunavut made a submission during the year 2017 to the federal Department of Transport under the (interpretation ends) National Trade Corridors Fund for funding to relocate the Pangnirtung and Kimmirut airports to new locations.

(interpretation) As the minister will also recall, the *Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in March 2023. The report indicates that:

(interpretation ends) “The airport cannot be enlarged to meet access needs, new safety standards, and operations by modern, cost-efficient aircraft. (interpretation) Community growth has created demand for land that is unavailable along the shoreline, but can be provided by using the fiord-side airport site. From (interpretation ends) 2014 to 2017, MMM Group Limited completed several projects in support of the development of a new airport in Pangnirtung.”

Can the Minister provide an update today on his department’s plans regarding the relocation of the Pangnirtung airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Transportation, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize this has been a topic for a number of years now. Mr. Speaker, I’ve mentioned to the member I know he’s been advocating for this project for a number of years, as well, through a couple of his terms now, and we just recently spoken to it I believe as recently as this morning or last week.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, we don’t have anything in our capital plan to move forward with actually relocating the airport. We did go to tender and award a contract for

resurfacing the Pangnirtung airport, which started work last summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary question, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister. As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly previously approved \$512,000 in capital carryover funding during its spring 2019 sitting for planning work related to the relocation of the Pangnirtung airport.

(interpretation ends) The *Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Need Assessment Update* indicates that an earlier estimate for relocating the airport was only about 189 million. Does the minister have a more current estimate for this project? Thank you.

Speaker: Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the line of questioning from the member. Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any updated information on numbers. When that study was completed it gave us an opportunity to look at the price tag and it just hasn't made its way into the capital planning process since that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Second and final supplementary question, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm following the information from this document, *2020-2040 Capital Needs Assessment* and usually there's an indication that in 2014 Kimmirut airport and Pangnirtung airport that it was possible to relocate the airstrip (interpretation ends) Both airports were identified as candidates for relocation. That was back in 2014, after all the assessment.

(interpretation) My question to the minister is last week's federal announcement concerning Arctic security indicated that funding will be provided from the new Arctic Infrastructure Fund for additional modernization of the Rankin Inlet Airport.

Will the Minister be submitting a new proposal to the Arctic Infrastructure Fund for relocating the Pangnirtung and Kimmirut airport? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like the member mentioned, the last time that airport infrastructure assessment was completed was 2014. Mr. Speaker, that was 12 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, my department is looking at, in this upcoming fiscal year in 2026-2027 fiscal year, to actually engage in a consultant to update that document, alongside, as these federal are being made, I think it is an opportune time to modernize that assessment and to take a look at what is possible and what isn't possible in the short and medium term, at the very least. I look forward in engaging and putting it out to tender in getting further information that I can, again, communicate with my colleagues around this House on what the best plan forward is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 50 – 7(1): Airport Infrastructure (Sammurtok)

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. I would like to begin by thanking the minister for the statement that he made in the House last week concerning the Rankin Inlet airport opening.

As the minister is aware, the federal government made a major announcement last week concerning investments in Arctic security infrastructure, including modernization of the Rankin Inlet airport.

The announcement indicated that:

“Phase 2 upgrades, which will include repaving the end-of-life runway, will be funded through the Arctic Infrastructure Fund. Upgrading the runway would enhance Department of National Defence operational capability and strengthen the airport’s role as a hub for surrounding communities.”

Mr. Speaker, this is an important project. Can the minister confirm the timeline for completion of this work, and can he indicate if the procurement process to select a contractor will be undertaken by his department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm holding in my hand the *Applicant Guide to the Arctic Infrastructure Fund*, which was just released on March 4. It is almost 50 pages long and it is volume 1, so we're just getting started on how these applications are going to be flowed through.

As recently as this morning I was speaking with the federal minister of infrastructure, who just happens to be in town and did an announcement with my colleague Minister Lyall just this morning, with Housing Initiatives.

I think it's very important as we look forward to these types of partnerships we have to finalize how we work with the agency to make sure that we're following the parameters of the program. They have broadened the horizons quite extensively on a lot of these federal programs, so we are making sure that we take advantage of leveraged opportunity.

With regard to the runway itself, that was just an announcement. We haven't gone through the official process even to submit a full application. The benefit of that project is we have already started the planning process for it, which makes it very near shovel-ready, so we can hit the ground running with it. My hope is that we can finalize the planning this year and actually get into construction in 2027, that summer, is what my intentions are, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary question, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Last week the federal announcement also indicated that:

“Northern Operational Support Nodes are secondary support facilities that function as forward operating bases. Today, two new Northern Operational Support Nodes are being announced at Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet. These smaller sites will enable the Canadian Armed Forces to project and sustain forces into more remote Arctic areas. Northern Operational Support Nodes provide much of the same support as hubs, but on a reduced scale. They will be equipped to accept and stage Canadian Armed Forces operational and tactical aircraft.”

Can the Minister indicate if this announcement will require additional expansion or renovation of the Rankin Inlet airport.

Speaker: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as these announcements are very, very fresh we're still figuring out the parameters on what exactly what type of expansion is going to be entailed; how many boots on the ground, or how many positions are going to be actually in the community on a permanent basis; and what type of is from your infrastructure that those sites are going to need. This is very preliminary, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately I'm not able to answer the member's question today. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Second and final supplementary question, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I want to revisit an issue that I raised during the previous Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, as you know, many public buildings in our territory are named for distinguished Inuit and Nunavummiut. A good example of this is the Peter Pitseolak High School in Kinngait.

As the Minister is aware, many airports in Canada are named for former prime ministers and other leaders. However, very few, if any, airports in Nunavut are named for distinguished individuals. Will the minister commit to having his department undertake a public campaign to invite nominations from Nunavummiut to propose appropriate names for our territory's airports? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do see different buildings around the country or around the world that are named after prominent, whether it be somebody from our history or somebody from our recent days. I've never really thought about it, Mr. Speaker but I'll take it under consideration. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for the high Arctic, Mr. Taqtu.

Oral Question 51 – 7(1): Arctic Security

Mr. Taqtu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the premier of Nunavut.

As the premier is aware, the Prime Minister of Canada made a major announcement last week concerning Arctic security. The Prime Minister's statement indicated that, and I quote:

“The Northern Operational Support Hubs Program is a long-term investment to strengthen Canada's military presence in the Arctic and the North. The program consists of a network of operational support sites designed to enable greater Canadian Armed Forces presence and responsiveness across northern regions through the provision of infrastructure and logistical support, improve access, reduce logistical challenges, and support year-round operations. Today, two new Northern Operational Support Hubs are being announced at Whitehorse and Resolute. These stations will include airstrips, logistics facilities, pre-positioned equipment, and critical supplies to ensure faster responses for search and rescue, natural disasters, and operations of all kinds.”

Mr. Speaker, this is important news for the community of Resolute Bay.

Can the premier describe what discussions he had with the prime minister about the initiative during his recent meetings in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague for asking the question. (interpretation ends) In terms of the operational support hub announcement, that is a very recent announcement and I haven't had the opportunity to discuss that specifically with the Prime Minister. However, on the broader topic of security and sovereignty, our message to our federal partners, including the prime minister, has been consistent: it is through strong and resilient communities that Canada will assert its security and sovereignty, it is not only about runways and planes and ships, it is about people.

Looking at the community of Resolute Bay, our sincere hope is that defence announcements and defence investments will translate into more opportunity for people who live in Resolute Bay, for the Inuit who have called Nunavut home for millennia.

Our advocacy has been to federal partners to look beyond just the defence aspects, and look for ways that communities can benefit. One example is on power generation infrastructure, which should qualify and would qualify, to our understanding, as dual use. With regard to Resolute, we hope that there will be real benefits to the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary question, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the response. Mr. Speaker, last week's federal announcement indicated that the new Northern Operational Support Hubs and Northern Operational Support Nodes initiative will be "backed by the investment of \$2.67 billion." Can the premier indicate what information has been provided by the federal government concerning the breakdown of how this funding will be spent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. Those are very good questions, and those are very similar to questions that we are posing to our federal partners. Looking at any given community that's going to be hosting a hub, such as Resolute Bay, there is potential for expenditure and investment in a number of different areas, and we simply haven't received the detailed breakdown as of yet from our federal partners. But we are working to strengthen our communication linkages with the Department of National Defence and other federal departments, because we need a close and consistent line of communication between them. We recognize that.

In the new context of heightened interest in the Arctic and heightened activity from our federal partners, the Nunavut government wants to be heard, and we want to make sure that communities' interests are being reflected when things are being built and when things are being planned. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Second and final supplementary question, Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Premier. As the premier is aware, a new naval facility near the community of Arctic Bay was announced by the previous federal government in the year 2007. Mr. Speaker, it is now 2025 and the facility is not yet operational. Can the premier indicate what information has been provided by the federal government concerning this facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. With regards to the Nanisivik refuelling facility, we have had communication with federal partners regarding that facility. I'm not sure if I'm at liberty to share that information, as it's not a Government of Nunavut asset. But my understanding at a high level is that the facility has been faced with challenges for a number of years. I'm sure the member knows that better than I do, coming from Arctic Bay.

The federal government's approach and plans around that facility may have changed. I can't share much beyond that, but I do hope that along the lines of better communication between federal agencies and communities, that the member will be provided with updated information from federal partners with regards to the future of that facility, and if the member would like, I'm willing to help open that line of communication between his office and the federal agencies involved. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Kautuk.

Oral Question 52 – 7(1): New Collective Agreement

Mr. Kautuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 13, 2026, the Minister of Human Resources might not have understood my question. The Legislative Assembly will be considering the government's 2026-2027 main estimates during the upcoming spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Can the Minister of Human Resources indicate what impact of the new collective agreement will be on the government's budget for compensation and benefits. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Human Resources, Minister Tattuinee.

Hon. Annie Tattuinee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. As the budget hasn't been presented or approved in the 2026-2027, hasn't been approved yet in the House, I am unable to answer the question, but I'll be happy to answer the question once the budget has been approved with the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Oral Question 53 – 7(1): Activities of the Petroleum Products Commission

Mr. Kablutsiak: My question today are for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut related to activities of the Petroleum Products Commission, whose department is responsible for the Petroleum Products Division.

As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly approved \$12.2 million in capital carryover funding during its winter 2025 sitting for the new Arviat tank farm project.

As the minister is aware, his department's 2026-2027 capital estimates do not include any funding for the project. The delay in the project is the result of the need to address community concerns related to the site of the new tank farm.

Can the minister provide an update today on the site selection process, and can he indicate if he expects to include funding in the department's 2027-2028 capital estimates, which will be introduced later this year during the Legislative Assembly's fall sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Mr. Hickee.

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising this issue, as it has been an ongoing process and when the original site that was chosen was deemed not sufficient by the community. There have been a number of consultations to determine a more appropriate site, and from what I understand, these discussions and consultations should be concluded later this month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): First supplementary question, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recognize, the new tank farm is not likely to become operational until the end of the decade. Until that time, it will still be necessary to meet the community's fuel needs. As the Minister may be aware, there are a number of issues with the current facility, including the lighting system.

Can the Minister confirm that his department is working to address these issues?

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: I thank the member again for raising this issue and for bringing it to my attention a couple weeks ago with regards to the lighting at the exiting tank farm.

We do recognize while we are looking at replacing pieces of infrastructure, we have to be cognizant into how much we are investing into the upkeep of something that's going to be remediated and torn down in the coming years.

Lighting at the site is obviously a critically important component of that, and I do apologize it has taking a little bit longer than anticipated. There was a contractor that was a contract was successfully achieved with; however, there have been some weather issues. All the materials that they need to temporarily fix the lighting at the existing tank farm are on site. Weather has hampered actual delivery of, I guess, the contract. They are hoping to start it back on it today was my latest information that I had. Unless I hear otherwise, they should be on the work site now. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): As we can't control the weather. Final supplementary question, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his response. As the Minister will recall, a Bill was introduced during the 5th Legislative Assembly which proposed to change the current Petroleum Products Division into a new "Petroleum Products Commission." However, the Bill did not pass.

My understanding is that this change would have resulted in the commission being a more arm's-length body, similar to the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

For example, spending on tank farms would be funded through a revolving fund, rather than going through the Legislative Assembly's capital estimates approval process.

Can the minister indicate whether or not the new government plans to reintroduce this legislation during the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the member for raising this as a concern. I too believe that the Petroleum Products Division should be more of a self-sustaining entity, whether that be a fully arm's-length entity, such as Qulliq Energy Corporation, or something that could be done legislatively to accommodate currently is something we're taking a very preliminary look at.

It did not pass in the last Assembly, so we have to decide with this Assembly whether to submit a legislative proposal along those lines.

I can assure the member that I have already talked to some of my officials at Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut on this topic itself, especially the capital replenishment side of things.

I think it's unfair to put expectations on a government to provide such very expensive projects such as a tank farm replacement, that is in the tens of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

I do welcome the question, and I do look forward to providing updates at a future point throughout this Assembly. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list.

Item number 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Return to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Petitions. Item 11, Responses to Petitions. Item 12, Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and other Matters. Item 13, Tabling of Documents. Item 14, Notices of Motions. Mr. Sammurtok.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 11 – 7(1): Extended Sitting Hours and Days – Notice of Motion

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 I will move the following motion.

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

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item 15, Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Item 16, Motions. Mr. Sammurtok.

Item 16: Motions

Motion 11 – 7(1): Extended Sitting Hours and Days

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

Speaker (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? I don't have any nays. Mr. Sammurtok, please proceed.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member of Iqaluit-Tasiluk, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours and days that the Speaker deems fit to assist with the business before the House during the present sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Item number 17, First Reading of Bills. Item 18, Second Reading of Bills. Item 19, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other Matters, Bill 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by motion 11 – 7(1), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

As well, before Committee of the Whole resumes, we will take a 20-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 15:14 and Committee commenced at 15:45

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

Chairman (Mr. Simon Kuliktana): In the Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 1, 2, 3 and 4. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

Mr. Taqtu: Thank you, Chair. We wish to continue the review of Bill 2, with the remaining departments of Community Services, Environment, and the Department of Culture and Heritage, the Nunavut Arctic College, and last but not least, the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Are we in agreement we first deal with Bill 2?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 2 – Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2026-2027 – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to ask Minister Simailak: Do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chair. 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 them in. For the record, Minister Simailak, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, colleagues. I am pleased to appear before the Committee today. Along with me is Kristie Cronin, Deputy Minister of Community Services, to my right; to my left is Adam Fisher, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister. I also have in the gallery with me supporting economies, sorry, Ken Kolb, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Supporting Communities, to present the Department's 2026-27 capital estimates.

These estimates form part of the proposed five-year capital plan for the 2026-2031 period, and reflect our shared responsibility to invest carefully, transparently, and strategically in infrastructure that supports safe, healthy, sustainable communities.

Mr. Chairman, for the 2026-27 fiscal year, the Department of Community Services is proposing a total capital appropriation of \$128.518 million. This capital program will address immediate infrastructure risks, strengthen municipal capacity, and position communities to meet future growth and service demands.

Mr. Chairman a central priority of the Department's 2026-27 capital program is improving the safety and reliability of essential municipal services, particularly drinking water. In 2026-27, the Department is proposing approximately \$63.7 million in direct capital investments in communities. This includes:

- \$49.5 million for the construction of new water treatment plants in six communities, and upgrading water infrastructure in community;
- \$9.1 million for new fire halls in Arviat and Whale Cove; and
- \$5.1 million for a new maintenance garage in Igloolik.

These projects address some of the most critical infrastructure needs facing communities today.

Mr. Chairman, ensuring that residents have access to safe and reliable drinking water is one of the Department's highest priorities. In several communities, existing water treatment systems can be very basic, and were built to standards that no longer reflect current regulatory requirements or operational demands.

Some systems rely heavily on manual processes and limited treatment technology, which affects the consistency and reliability of water quality. The department's \$49.5 million

investment in water infrastructure will replace these aging systems with new facilities that meet current treatment, monitoring and safety standards.

These upgrades will:

- Improve filtration and disinfection processes;
- Strengthen system monitoring and control;
- Increase operational reliability; and
- Support compliance with current drinking water guidelines.

Over time these investments are expected to improve system performance and contribute to fewer service disruptions and boil-water advisories.

In addition to water infrastructure, the department is investing in facilities that support emergency response and municipal operations.

The construction of new fire halls in Arviat and Whale Cove will improve emergency response capacity, firefighter safety, and equipment storage.

The new maintenance garage in Igloolik will provide a safe and functional facility for the servicing of municipal vehicles and equipment, reducing operational risk and extending asset life.

Together, these projects strengthen the operational capacity of the hamlets.

Beyond direct construction projects, the Department is proposing approximately \$64.05 million in funding to support municipally managed infrastructure and long-term asset sustainability. This includes:

- \$21 million for the Municipal Parking Garage Program;
- \$18 million in Municipal Block Capital Funding for community identified priorities;
- \$9 million in capital funding to the City of Iqaluit;
- \$5.5 million for the Mobile Equipment Program;
- \$5 million for the Sustainable Service Delivery Program;
- \$3 million for Municipal Design and Planning funding;
- \$1.8 million for the Fire Truck Replacement Program; and
- \$750,000 for the Minor Capital Municipal Studies program.

These programs provide municipalities with the flexibility, tools, and resources required to plan and deliver infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Mr. Chairman, the department's capital budget also includes targeted investments in economic development and tourism-related assets that support community based economic activity and regional development. In 2026-27, the Department is proposing \$750,000 for the maintenance and repair of Economic Development branch assets, including regional and community visitor centers and the research and tourism vessel *Nuliajuk*. These asset's support tourism development, cultural promotion, research activity, and local business opportunities, particularly in smaller and remote communities.

Maintaining and upgrading these facilities and assets helps ensure they remain safe, functional, and capable of supporting economic growth.

Mr. Chairman, the department's capital program is designed to maximize the impact of territorial investments by leveraging federal and partner funding. Territorial contributions support project readiness, regulatory compliance, and matching requirements, enabling communities to access federal infrastructure programs and other external funding sources. This collaborative approach increases the scale and impact of infrastructure investments across Nunavut.

The department's capital projects are developed through a structured planning and prioritization process that considers asset condition, risk, community readiness, cost-effectiveness, and long-term operating implications.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Department of Community Services proposed 2026-27 capital appropriation of \$128.518 million represents a focussed and responsible investment in safe drinking water, public safety infrastructure, municipal capacity, economic development assets, and long-term sustainability.

These investments reflect our commitment to supporting communities today, while preparing for our future needs. I thank the Committee for its attention and look forward to responding to the members' questions.

Mat'na, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Simailak. Does any member of the Regular Members' Caucus have any Opening Comments? Please proceed, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Regular Members' Caucus on its review of the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Community Services.

The department came into existence on April 1, 2025, following the government's recent reorganization. The department's proposed capital budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is \$128.518 million. A number of the capital projects and programs that are now under the

responsibility of the department were previously administered by the former Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

The department's Community Development Grants and Contribution Policy was last revised in November 2024. It sunsets in November 2028. Schedules to the policy cover a number of capital programs, including the Municipal Mobile Equipment Program, the Granular Crushing Equipment Program, the Fire Truck Replacement Program and the Sustainable Service Delivery Program.

The department's stand-alone Municipal Parking Garage Program Policy sunsets in March 2027.

The 2025-2026 capital estimates of the former Department of Community and Government Services included \$10 million in funding for a new "Sustainable Service Delivery Program." The proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the new Department of Community Services include \$5 million for the program.

Information provided by the department indicates that its purpose is to "proactively address repairs to municipal facilities to reduce the number of emergencies... the intention is to split this fund in half between lifecycle upgrades and emergencies."

Members encourage the minister to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the department's expenditures under the program.

The 2025-2026 capital estimates of the former Department of Community and Government Services included \$6.15 million in municipal capital block funding under its minor capital budget. The proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the new Department of Community Services include \$18 million for a stand-alone municipal capital block funding budget.

Information provided by the department indicates that "starting in the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the Granular Crushing Equipment Program will be discontinued, and its funding will be reallocated to the Municipal Capital Block Fund. As the department continues its shift to block funding, the Municipal Parking Garage Program will not accept any new planning or planning/design applications starting in 2026-2027. However, it is expected funding will continue for current participating communities to complete their parking garage construction projects."

Members encourage the department to clearly communicate this change in direction to municipalities. Members also encourage the minister to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the department's expenditures and initiatives under these programs.

On May 29, 2023, the Government of Nunavut *Drinking Water Strategic Framework* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Members remain concerned about the frequency of

boil-water advisories and other water quality situations in a number of communities. The government's proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates include a total of approximately \$54 million in funding for projects related to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. \$5.1 million of this funding is for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure's ongoing work to replace and upgrade infrastructure in Rankin Inlet. These assets are under the jurisdiction of the territorial government. The remainder of the funding is being administered by the new Department of Community Services for projects in a number of communities.

The government has issued a number of requests for proposals in recent years for solid waste management feasibility studies for a number of communities. Recent departmental business plans have indicated that it "continues to support stakeholders in the development of a solid waste strategy ... [however], further progress on this project is delayed due to capacity restraints held by partner stakeholders." Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work.

The 2025-2026 capital estimates of the Department of Community and Government Services included \$750,000 in funding for municipal studies and projects under its minor capital budget. The proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the new Department of Community Services include \$750,000 for a stand-alone municipal studies budget. Members encourage the minister to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the department's expenditures and initiatives under this program.

The department's proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates also include funding for Economic Development Facilities Lifecycle improvements. This funding was previously administered by the former Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Members encourage the minister to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the department's expenditures and initiatives under this program. Members encourage the department to consider expanding the scope of the funding to include improvements to facilities owned by the Nunavut Development Corporation and its subsidiaries.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Community Services. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We'll now proceed to the page by page review of the capital estimates starting on page K3. We will now review the Department of Community Services' Supporting Community Branch. Do members have any questions? Member for Rankin Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see in your capital estimates regarding some water treatment plants for other communities. I'm just wondering if you've got any future plans for upgrading the water treatment plant for Chesterfield Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for his question. Water treatment infrastructure is a priority across Nunavut, and we know that many communities have aging systems and growing demand that needs to be addressed. The projects currently underway reflect those that have progressed through planning, engineering and capital approval. Communities moving to construction once that is complete, and funding has been secured through capital planning process.

For the communities that are not currently in construction, the department continues to work with hamlets to assess needs, reviewing infrastructure conditions, and support the development of future projects proposals. Those projects can be considered through the Government of Nunavut's capital planning cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Simailak. Member for Chesterfield Rankin, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Hamlet of Chesterfield Inlet is in the process of, or making plans to replace their maintenance garage, and I don't see anything in regards for placement or renovation for the community of Chesterfield Inlet, but I see some for Igloolik. Can you update me on that, please. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department works with each hamlet to see what their needs are, and the design for Chesterfield Inlet was completed and construction should be soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that you got fire truck replacement indication in various communities. Which community is getting the replacement this year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. The communities physically receiving a fire truck this sealift year is going to be Sanirajak and Taloyoak, and then the next community to receive fire trucks the following year is Chesterfield Inlet and Whale Cove. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Member for Rankin Inlet-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this topic, this will be my last question but I might be wrong on this one, so you can let me know, Mr. Chair. It's regarding the Rankin Inlet hamlet office replacement. It could be the other department, it might not be you, but I would like to find out if there's any plans for Rankin Inlet hamlet replacement. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's nothing in the plan right now for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have the Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Fred Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions are regarding municipal capital block funding program. Information provided by your department indicates that your department is ending some of its proposal-based programs and moving to more block funding. Can the minister elaborate on this new direction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason behind going towards municipal capital block funding is we're looking at giving the hamlets more autonomy. The hamlets will be able to decide which project should take priority. It's giving the hamlets the authority to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Prior to going this new way, when most programs were proposal-based, what was the total amount of money that each municipality could apply for each year? I ask as I'm wondering if the amount under the new block funding program will be equal to that, less than that, or more than that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: If you'll give me a second here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your patience. Compared to last year, they are going up significantly. For Cambridge Bay for the region of Kitikmeot it was \$1,308,000 and the new figure is \$3,830,000 for the Kitikmeot region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Simailak. Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I think we understand that under the older proposal-based program a municipality could apply for various programs each year to help them meet their needs of the required activities that they carry out, one proposal for each item that they require.

Now under the new block funding program they now receive a set amount based on several community-specific factors, and out of that amount, they can make their own decisions on their priority needs.

You probably just answered this, but what is the maximum amount of funding that can be provided to a municipality during a single fiscal year under this program, and for example let's say for the municipality of Cambridge Bay? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's based on the criteria. So it depends on the hamlet, how much infrastructure there is, how much road there is. So it varies, but it follows the criteria. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we all want to ensure that our municipalities can receive adequate resources to carry out their mandated requirements. We would not want to approve new or make changes to older programs that would result in municipalities being funded less, so I'm glad to hear what the minister said, that the funding for municipalities under the block funding program is going up from what they used to get, so I'm pleased to hear that. That's more of a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Pedersen. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are continually working with the hamlets to see how we can make some changes, and I appreciate the comment. We are trying to work with all the hamlets to see how we can all serve our communities better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member from Arviat South, Jamie Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. Your department's proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates include a total of \$49,553,000 in Government of Nunavut funding for water- and wastewater-related capital projects. This represents 44.4 per cent of your department's total capital budgets for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

What is the estimated total cost to replace and/or upgrade drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in all of Nunavut's communities? *Mat'na*.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Arviat South. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Member, for this question. That's a question that we can't answer at the moment, the reason being each community has different needs. Let's say one community might need a water source that's quite a few miles further, or wastewater or solid-waste facility. So it varies by each community and unfortunately that's a question we cannot answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair, (interpretation) and thank you, Minister Simailak. (interpretation end) My next question is related to municipal capital block funding. What is the maximum amount of funding that can be provided from a municipality during a single fiscal year under this program? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, member for Arviat South. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. Funding allocations are determined using a formula that considers population, municipal facility footprint, recreation infrastructure, municipal roads, and the power and freight cost index. So there's a certain criteria that has to be followed, and it will vary by each community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Member for Arviat South, James Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the minister for answering that. Which communities in Nunavut require new municipal offices, community halls and arenas? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Arviat South. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. It varies. It depends on each community. It's up to the hamlets to come to the department and request some assistance in procuring or securing some of those new infrastructure the member is asking about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Arviat South, Jamie Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the minister for his response. Just a comment on Arviat arena. Under integrated Community Sustainability Plan for municipal

infrastructure, Arviat's arena, since 1981, the Hamlet of Arviat has provided and operated the local arena to the residents, sports participants, and visitors to the Hamlet of Arviat. The Arviat arena is one of the oldest of its kind in Nunavut, and it's in desperate need of major renovations. Can the minister indicate that Arviat will be listed for a new arena? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Arviat South. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question regarding Arviat receiving a new arena. The department will be willing to work with the hamlet in the integrated community sustainability plan, and the department would be able to look at seeing what other funding allocations might be available, whether it's federal partners or other means that might be available. But the department will be willing to listen and see how, where we can help with procuring a new arena, not just in Arviat, but every community in Nunavut. We would be able to look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Amittuq, Abraham Qammaniq.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is in regards to a parking garage. There's \$21 million available, and I don't know if Sanirajak made a proposal. But what I would like to hear is how they go about getting funds for a parking garage. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Amittuq. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. The Hamlet of Sanirajak did submit a request for a parking garage after the initial cohorts for the Parking Garage Program had already been established. As a result, the project was not included in the current program cohorts.

Following completion of the current cohorts, the department is moving toward a block funding approach for municipal infrastructure projects. In the meantime, the department continues to encourage communities to explore other available funding sources, including the Canada Community Building Fund, Hamlet Capital Funding, and the Make Good Program, which would help support municipal infrastructure needs, while longer-term capital planning continues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Amittuq, Abraham Qammaniq.

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

Chairman (interpretation): Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Minister, welcome. My question is in regards to the municipal office recreation centre complex. On September 20, 2024 the Minister of CGS (interpretation ends) proposed for approval at the planning stage for 2025-2026 fiscal year. Was the Pangnirtung municipal office community hall? (interpretation) Could you give us an update on this, as I think it's under your department. Could you give us an update, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for his question. It is on the list. We are working towards it and we will continue to work with the hamlet on that initiative. So it's in the queue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. John Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I just want to bring this up. The arena in Pangnirtung does not have artificial ice, and with the change in climate, we use it for a very a very short time, because it freezes at a later time and melts at an earlier time. What are the plans for the Pangnirtung arena? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Pangnirtung. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding artificial ice for Pangnirtung, I believe that is what the member is asking about? See if they are able to get artificial ice? I'm getting a nod yes, so I will continue.

Currently that is not in the plan, but if the hamlet puts it into the community sustainability plan we can look at that as a capital project, but at the time it's not in any plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Pangnirtung, Johnny Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you. The government knows that climate change has an effect on Pangnirtung, and there's plans in the works in making changes to accommodate climate change. And I'm sure that those types of programs will start in Nunavut. If we weren't dealing with climate change, I wouldn't have brought it up, but there are negative effects with climate change. There's the recreation centres, the lights, the roads, and everything that is affected by climate change. It's just a comment at this time.

I do have another question, Mr. Chairman. Your department, for 2026-2027 capital estimates, there's 21 million that was brought up, and in 2026-2027, the government

services has 21 million for the municipal parking garage program, and will no longer be accepting new planning and design applications.

What feedback has your department received from the Nunavut Association of Municipalities concerning this change? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Pangnirtung. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. We are meeting with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities quite frequently, and they did want more flexibility for the hamlets, so that is I believe the direction they are happy we are heading in. It gives the municipality more autonomy, more community empowerment. They get to decide which of their communities priorities will take priority, and they get to work on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Pangnirtung, Johnny Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Minister, for the response. And it's understandable why you're responding like that.

Now, in October 2022, CGS announced in the Legislative Assembly, they explained the new office for Kimmirut and in Rankin Inlet in your plans and your department that the Minister is responsible for also announced that money for the design and construction. And it is explained in the statements that they want to get it into the design phase in 2026-2027 fiscal year in the arenas in Kimmirut and Kinngait and the new municipal office in Kimmirut. I would like to understand how these projects were selected. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Pangnirtung. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. The department maintains a design funding program to support municipalities in advancing priority infrastructure projects. This funding allows projects that have completed the planning stage to move into design, so that the scope of work, engineering requirements, and cost estimates can be confirmed before seeking construction funding through the capital planning process.

For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the design funding program includes several municipal priority requirements that are ready to move beyond planning into the design phase.

Regarding Kimmirut, planning work for the arena was previously completed under the Federal Small Communities Fund arena planning bundle. Through the department's

design funding program, the Kimmirut arena will move into the design phase in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Advancing this work will allow the department and hamlet to refine the scope of the project and develop accurate construction cost estimates so that the project can be considered for future capital funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And regarding the Kimmirut municipal office, the municipal office project will enter the planning and design phase in the 2026-2027 fiscal year through the department's design funding local government priorities program. This program supports high priority municipal infrastructure projects that are ready to move beyond planning and into design. Advancing the Kimmirut municipal office into design will allow the department and hamlet to develop the architectural and engineering plans, confirm the full scope of the project, and establish reliable construction cost estimates.

Once the design phase is completed, the project can be considered through the Government of Nunavut's capital planning process for future construction funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Member for Aivilik, Ms. Angootealuk.

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister for Community Services, I would like to ask, your department for 2025-2026 capital estimate included 5.5 million in funding for municipal mobile equipment program. How much of this funding has been spent to date? Will you commit to providing a list of equipment during the 2026-2027 fiscal year under this program?

Chairman: Thank you, Member for Aivilik. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for her question. We can commit to getting back to the member with that. This is for our spending for 2026-2027. Can't say what was spent, but we can report on it next year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Aivilik.

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and also Minister Simailak. My other question is what sort of budget is given, how much money is handed out to the hamlets for emergency management? Sometimes search and rescue happens for a long time. They sometimes search on land for a long time, and then they have to use their own equipment and their skidoos and Hondas; they have to use their own equipment. And if they have a breakdown, they can't get paid to fix them. What else can be done to manage that? There are some people who don't work full-time, and then they go help with the search and rescue, and then their equipment breaks down. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you to Member for Aivilik. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for her question. That's actually an operations and maintenance question; it's not a capital question. But just to comment on that, the department does try to work as much as possible with each hamlet with regard to search and rescue. We do want to try and give as much help as we can give for the best possible outcome, but unfortunately that's an operations and maintenance question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Aivilik.

Ms. Angootealuk (interpretation): Thank you. I am done. (interpretation ends) But it's still bothering me. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: Thank you. Member for Aggu, Mr. Attagutaluk.

Mr. Attagutaluk (interpretation): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The arenas in Sanikiluaq and Igloodik have burned down. What are the status of these communities? How does their insurance cover to replace to get new arena for these communities? *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: Thank you, member for Aggu. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for his question with regards to replacement of the two arenas there that unfortunately burned down. The department and the hamlets are still going through the NAMIX, the insurance program, so it is still a bit too early to be able to get more information on it. It is still going through the insurance process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Aggu. Do members have any more questions? Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Your department's five-year capital plan indicates that \$15,322,000 is planned to be spent on solid waste site upgrades in nine communities during the 2027-2028 fiscal year. Why hasn't funding been allocated to solid waste site upgrades during the 2026-2027 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Member from Arviat South. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. The reason being for that is right now the communities of Arviat and Clyde River solid waste site upgrades are pilot projects, to see what other regulatory requirements may be

needed for solid waste facilities. Right now we're dealing with the two communities to see if we need to make any or changes or improvements for the next communities. That's what we're working on now. It could be a capital carryover as well so we can keep working on these projects. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member for Arviat South.

Mr. Kablutsiak: I thank the minister for his response. As of today, what is the total estimated cost of upgrading solid waste sites in all of Nunavut's communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for his question. Unfortunately that's a question we cannot answer. Each hamlet has different needs for solid waste facility. Some may need more work, some may need less work, remediation work. There's a whole slew of different reasons why that question cannot be answered at this time, but we'll take each community by each community to ensure that we try to make sure that all solid waste facilities are upgraded or renovated or built to new, so that we can follow *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, Avatittinnik, Kamatsiarniq*.

So we are working with each hamlet to make sure that we do the best we can with working hand in hand with each hamlet office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: *Mat'na*. (interpretation) The minister stated that you cannot respond to it right now. Would it be possible for you to respond in a letter and hand it to the MLAs? I would really appreciate that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kablutsiak. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Siailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. Recent study has not been conducted for all municipalities, so that's the reason why we cannot say how much it would cost altogether for all the hamlets.

But for the time being we're working on Arviat and Clyde River to upgrade their solid waste facilities, and we can start perhaps seeing how much it might cost and use that as a baseline and then go forward.

But like I mentioned earlier, each hamlet will be different. It all depends on how much work is needed at their solid waste facility in each community, to ensure we're protecting

our land and our waters. That's the reason why we're taking community by community, first off with Arviat and Clyde River. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Does any other members have any more questions? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Community Services Supporting Community Branch totalling capital expenditure of \$127,768,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please go to page K5. We will now review the Department of Community Service Supporting Economic Branch. Do members have any questions? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As your department might be aware, the fish plant in Chesterfield Inlet is out of commission, renovating it, or doing some minor work. I ask the question because it's been shut down for the last four, five years.

The previous minister stated they were in talks with either Nunavut Development Corporation or Nunavut Business Credit Corporation to have a replacement built in Chesterfield Inlet. Has any process, has this gone anywhere besides the talk? Because that would be a good investment for the people of Chesterfield Inlet to make a few dollars during the summer season. *Qujannamiik.*

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. It's not in our current capital plan, but we are willing to look at it and see where they can help them up with getting that up and running again. This current plan is for visitor centre improvements, but we can look at going forward how we can support Chesterfield Inlet and getting that back up and running again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Johnny Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Supporting economic, the fisheries, I mean offshore, offshore is included too in the fishery.

What would be an appropriate way to explain? We don't see a whole lot of information about fisheries here, and there are two kinds of, three kinds fisheries in Pangnirtung, char fishery, in-shore fishery, turbot offshore fishery, turbot. (interpretation) Perhaps if the minister can explain further the operation of fisheries within the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to fisheries, that's through the operations side of the department; it's not through capital. But we do want to see where we can help out, if any way possible. We would be willing to listen to any suggestions or ideas from the Pangnirtung fish plant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pond Inlet, Clyde River as well, Qikiqtarjuaq, those communities, I'm just using them as an example, because there's a capital fish plant in the community of Pangnirtung. You mentioned the issues and the expenditure capital estimates. We don't deal with these issues, or are they identified or is there like for purchasing boats or using for commercial fisheries? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned last time in our capital plan, we would be happy to listen and support where we can, but the private industry has been taking that on as part of their business work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Do any other members have any other questions? Do members agree with the Department of Community Services Supporting Economic Branch total capital expenses of 750,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page K2. Do members agree with the Department of Community Services total capital expenditure of \$128,518,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Community Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Any closing comments, Minister Simailak?

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you colleagues for your questions and comments. All these questions and comments does help us move forward to see where we need to make some improvements or suggestions and whatnot. I would like to thank all the staff members here with me today, and all the people in the back in offices that have been working tirelessly trying to get our capital budget together.

Through this work, through this House, we will move forward throughout the years. We will see brand new water treatment plans, solid waste facilities and whatnot to help all of our communities. The plan is to see less boil-water advisories and in protecting our environment. That's the plan we are working on. I thank you very much for your support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Simailak. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out. Please stay in your seats. We'll now start with Department of Environment.

Chairman (Mr. Fred Pedersen): We're going to take a ten minute break while we're waiting for the officials. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 16:47 and resumed at 17:06*

Chairman: Thank you. Seeing that we have a quorum, we will call the Committee of the Whole meeting back to order. We're dealing with Department of Environment.

I would like to ask Mr. Koonoo: Do you have any officials you would like to have appear before you with the committee?

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the ministers officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. For the record, Minister Koonoo, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Department of Environment's Capital Plan for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

With me today are my officials: Stephen Mansell, Acting Deputy Minister of Environment; Naomie Pudluk, Assistant Deputy Minister; Nikki Nweze, Director of Corporate Services; and Neil Kigutaq, Director of Wildlife Operations.

For this fiscal period, the Department of Environment proposes a capital budget of \$2.65 million. This expenditure will permit the department to concentrate on two program areas:

- Wildlife Management; and
- Parks and Special Places.

The Wildlife Operations and Wildlife Research Division has an annual capital budget of \$750,000 for wildlife office renovations. These funds are currently scheduled to be used for as-and-when-needed repairs to wildlife offices across Nunavut, to address urgent or unforeseen issues identified over the course of the fiscal year.

At this time, the Department of Environment is working with Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut and staff on the ground to identify any pressing repair and upkeep needs, and will prioritize work based on that feedback and financial availability.

Our Wildlife Operations and Research Division will also spend \$770,000 to replace old mobile and lab equipment. This is a total increase of \$400,000 from the prior year.

A major project identified for Parks and Special Places in the 2026-2027 fiscal year is the infrastructure development for the Agguttinni Territorial Park north of Clyde River. This project has experienced some delay due to increases in the cost of construction materials, but is now moving ahead through a partnership with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

In March 2025, the Government of Nunavut approved a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Environment, Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association that outlines all parties' relationship in the construction and shared use of a building in Clyde River. Through this partnership, the QIA and Nunavut Parks will share the cost of a new facility which will address both their infrastructure needs in the community. Building materials were received in Clyde River in summer 2025 and construction of the facility has begun.

We will continue monitoring and maintaining infrastructure in all of Nunavut's territorial parks and campgrounds while ensuring that all work in our territorial parks is done following the *Umbrella Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement*.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Department of Environment's Capital Plan remains modest and focused on areas that enable our department to serve the needs and priorities of Nunavummiut better. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Does a member of the Regular Members' Caucus have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister and your staff, welcome.

I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Regular Members' Caucus on its review of the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Environment.

The department's proposed capital budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is \$2.65 million. The department's proposed 2025-2026 capital estimates included \$3.6 million in funding for the Arctic Bay Wildlife Office replacement project. (interpretation ends) However, this amount was not approved in the Legislative Assembly. A \$459,000 capital carryover was subsequently approved by the Legislative Assembly during its winter 2025 sitting. (interpretation) Members look forward to the department clarifying its plans for the replacement of wildlife offices.

On September 10, 2019, the federal government and Nunavut government announced \$4.7 million in federal funding under the Canada Nature Fund to support the establishment of a new territorial park near the community of Clyde River.

(interpretation ends) During the Legislative Assembly's fall 2022 sitting, the House was informed that the department was working with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to "finalize a memorandum of understanding" concerning the construction of a shared facility in the park. Information provided by the department indicates that the memorandum of understanding "was approved in December 2023."

Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this project and encourage the minister to table a copy of the final memorandum of understanding in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

(interpretation) The Legislative Assembly approved a \$1.40 (sic) million capital carryover for the Igloodik Wildlife Research Lab Renovation Project during its winter sitting in 2025.

(interpretation ends) Information provided by the department indicates that it had received approval to enter into "feasibility discussions with the Government of Canada to lease space at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay."

(interpretation) During the Minister's recent appearance, members were informed that the department has been working towards an agreement in principle. (interpretation ends) Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work and encourage the Minister to table a copy of the final agreement in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

(interpretation) The Environment department's 2025-2026 capital estimates included one-time funding of \$550,000 for the acquisition of a backhoe and snowblower for the Iqaluit Kuunga, or Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park. (interpretation ends) The stated purpose of this acquisition was to "provide more reliable year-round access to the park." Members

encourage the department to consider the feasibility of similar acquisitions for other territorial parks.

(interpretation) Members continue to encourage the minister to begin the practice of tabling an annual report in the Legislative Assembly which details the department's activities, expenditures, and initiatives in relation to Nunavut's territorial parks system, in addition to containing information concerning such measures as the annual number of visitors to our parks.

(interpretation ends) This type of reporting would be of benefit to all members in evaluating the impact of the parks program and related capital expenditures. Members also recommend that the department's annual reporting provide detailed information concerning its usage of terrestrial and marine mobile equipment and other capital assets.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Environment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: We'll now proceed to page-by-page review of the capital estimates, starting on page I-3. Department of Environment, Program Management Branch. Total capital expenditures, \$2,650,000. Do members have questions? Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) 2025-2026 capital estimate included 750,000 for wildlife office renovation. As of today, how much of this funding has been spent? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to request Nikki to answer that question, if that's approved.

Chairman: Yes, approval is given for that. Thank you. Go ahead, Ms. Nikki.

Ms. Nweze: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have not spent anything in the budget. The project, the Wildlife Office renovation went out for tender, and the cost of renovation is more than what we can afford, so we don't have the money able to do the renovation. At this point we haven't spent anything in the budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for the reply. Mr. Mike.

Mr. Mike (interpretation): Thank you. I just wanted to ask that question. My question is: Which wildlife offices are currently being renovated with this funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mike. Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. Currently there are no offices being renovated, but these are the ones that we would like to do for wildlife offices.

There's eight wildlife offices across Nunavut that need replacement. We would like to replace Arctic Bay, Arviat, Baker Lake, Igloolik, Kinngait, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, and Rankin Inlet, and two wildlife offices in Taloyoak and Qikiqtarjuaq require renovations to meet operational requirements.

The remaining 15 wildlife offices across Nunavut meet operational requirements and do not require renovations or replacements. So the budget is, you are correct, it was \$750,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Mr. Mike, you're done? Thank you. Next on my next, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Your department's capital summary sheet indicates that wildlife office replacement projects in Arviat, Baker Lake, and Kinngait are requested for planning studies. What is the estimated cost to construct a new wildlife office? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I would like to request Mr. Stephen Mansell to answer that question. Thank you.

Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question.

As was pointed out in the response from the committee, last year the department sought funding to replace a wildlife office in Arctic Bay. It was determined that the amount was too much, and we've been looking at around five or six million dollars for a new wildlife office.

The department heard from the last Assembly that that was excessive, and so we need to go back to the drawing board and determine sort of how can we do these things more economically.

As the minister outlined, there are a number of communities that need a new wildlife office, but we need to take a step back and identify how can we either build on things

going on in the community, partner like we've done with QIA to do these things more economically. We want to get these done, but right now the that are numbers coming out, five to six million dollars, we've heard from members in the past Assembly that that is quite a bit for a wildlife office. Thank you. Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you for that reply, Mr. Mansell. Next on my list, Mr. Attagutaluk.

Mr. Attagutaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Legislative Assembly approved that \$1.04 million capital carryover, as he indicated 1.40 earlier, for the Igloolik Wildlife Research Lab Renovation Project during its winter 2025 sitting. As of today, what is the status of this project? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Attagutaluk. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently that is on hold until we have discussed it with Char (ph). Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Koonoo. Any other names? Currently I don't have any. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) You mentioned that Rankin Inlet needs a new wildlife office. Is that in the planning stages now? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Member, for the question. Currently it's not in the planning stages yet. It needs one. There's no current plans currently. There's none in the plans. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When do you plan on going onto the planning stages? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, Rankin Inlet has building that is leased right now. But like what we said earlier, these are plans where I mentioned that the cost is too high, and we need to find out more economic ways to replace or build new wildlife offices. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Next on my list, Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Information contained in your department's recent capital carryover substantiation sheet indicated that the cabinet or your department have entered into feasibility discussions with Government of Canada to lease space at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay.

As of today, what is the status of these discussions, and what is the estimated annual cost of leasing this space? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Member, for your question. We have made real progress to do that, but currently as of today we have not, we don't have that number to give out right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Koonoo. Any other questions? Members? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Environment Program Management Branch total capital expenditures of \$2,650,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree with the Department of Environment total capital expenditures of \$2,650,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Environment?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any closing comments, Minister Koonoo?

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for all the members. While we do appreciate your support on this, and in the future we would like to get more support as well so we can replace these wildlife offices and hopefully get more wildlife members in the picture. And we again thank you for this time to talk about capital estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>>Applause

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out. We'll take a five-minute break to get ready for Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 17:31 and resumed at 17:44*

Chairman (Pedersen): Thank you all for coming back. We'll now continue with our Committee of the Whole meetings.

I would like to ask Minister Healey Akearok: Do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee?

Ms. Healey Akearok: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair, thank you.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. For the record, Minister Healey Akearok, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments, Ms. Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right I have the president of Nunavut Arctic College, Jackie Price; and to my left, the Chief Financial Officer of Nunavut Arctic College, Bola Lawal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. As you know, I am stepping in for Minister Akeagok, and who I am sure would do a much better job than me. I will do my best here today for you.

I am pleased to present Nunavut Arctic College's draft 2026-2027 capital estimates. The college is requesting \$2.3 million for the upcoming fiscal year:

- \$500,000 is for Small Capital;
- \$1.5 million for Ongoing Lifecycle; and
- \$300,000 for Information Technology Infrastructure.

Small Capital funds support the college's daily operations, including vehicles and furniture. In 2026-2027, these funds will be used for mobile equipment, fuel tank replacement at the Arviat Nunavut Arctic College Finance Headquarters, and the Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet trades schools, and fuel spill remediation at the Piqqusilirivvik Cultural Centre. It will also include collaboration with Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut to identify additional communities, and other operational needs as they arise.

The college's largest capital request is for ongoing lifecycle funding, which supports repairs and replacements for its existing facilities. Proposed funding allocations includes renovations in Arviat, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay, Iqaluit, Igloolik, Sanirajak, and Rankin Inlet, with remaining funds reserved for emergency repairs arising during the year.

Nunavut Arctic College continues to expand its use of information technology in program delivery each year. If approved, this funding will facilitate the replacement of aging assets and support ongoing efforts to maintain Nunavut Arctic College's network infrastructure and technology hardware.

These are the capital plans for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. Does a member of the Regular Members' Caucus have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Qammaniq.

Mr. Qammaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Regular Members' Caucus on its review of the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of Nunavut Arctic College.

The college's proposed capital budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is \$2.3 million. This amount is the same as in the previous four fiscal years. During its winter 2025 sitting, the Legislative Assembly approved \$1.209 million in supplementary capital funding for a number of projects related to facility repairs and information technology.

Members encourage the college to include detailed information on its capital expenditures in its statutorily required annual reports. The college's 2022-2023 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 9, 2023. Its 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 annual reports have not yet been tabled.

On November 5, 2020, the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College tabled a *Preliminary Report: Community Learning Centres by Region* in the Legislative Assembly. This report provided a comprehensive description of the condition of facilities. Members note that a number of community learning centres were constructed decades ago. Members encourage the minister to table an updated report in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

Nunavut Arctic College's current business plan indicates that one of its priorities has been to "develop a plan for Community Learning Centres upgrades and replacement." The business plan also indicates that Nunavut Arctic College "continues to work through the Government of Nunavut capital process to support upgrades to the College's physical assets, through its 'ongoing lifecycle' budget request. The college also sits at bilateral and

trilateral tables, where discussions on program and training needs also include needs for capital.”

During the Legislative Assembly’s sitting of October 29, 2024, the President of Nunavut Arctic College stated during proceedings of the Committee of the Whole that the college “has identified ten community learning centres that we would like to see replaced.” Members encourage the minister to provide regular updates on the status of the college’s work in this area.

Members recognize the importance of the college working with industry partners to develop and proceed with infrastructure opportunities for delivering heavy equipment, mines and trades training in communities outside of the regional centres.

During the Legislative Assembly’s sitting on March 5, 2024, the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College stated that “the mine training centre is the focus to build phase 2 of the trade school in Rankin Inlet and the college continues to work with the Department of Community and Government Services for this important mine training centre that will be in development in the coming years... there will be opportunities for other communities outside of Rankin Inlet that will need to be implemented by the government once we identify more financial support. That comes with finding instructors for the Mine Training Strategy.”

Members require the minister to provide regular updates on the status of the college’s work in this area.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. We’ll now proceed to a page-by-page review of the capital estimates, starting on page N-3.

We will now review Nunavut Arctic College Headquarters Branch. Nunavut Arctic College, Headquarters Branch, total capital expenditures \$2,300,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the college is aware, an assessment of the Arctic College in Chesterfield Inlet, they are opening in March. You indicated that the college’s largest capital request for ongoing lifecycle funding which supports repairs and replacement for existing facilities, but I don’t see Chesterfield Inlet for either renovations or replacement as in the assessment. I indicated that the College needs to be either replaced or some repairs needs to be done. Can you update me on that, please. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Ms. Healey Akearok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. The member is correct that Chesterfield Inlet is not on the list for 2026-2027 for this current fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When will it be in the plans, either in doing renovations or replacement for that Arctic College in Chesterfield Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the follow-up question. All of the communities are considered every year in the development of every capital ask, and your comments have been noted and will be taken into consideration. *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. Next on my list, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nunavut Arctic College current business plan indicates that one of its priorities has been to develop a plan for community learning centres upgrades and replacements.

During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of October 29, 2024, the president of Nunavut Arctic College stated during the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole that "the college has identified ten community learning centres that we would like to see replaced." Which community learning centres have been identified? And is Arviat listed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. The list of the top ten community learning centres that require replacement is still in development, and it's actually part of a bigger initiative to explore opportunities for funding outside of the Government of Nunavut and also considering other facilities such as student residences and additional facilities like Piqqusilirivvik, which support learning centres, Inuit cultural and skills and language. And so when that list is finalized, we'll be more than happy to share it with the committee. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister. Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And this will be my last question. What is the estimated cost to replace all ten community learning centres? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the follow-up question. Based on the estimates we have to date, the replacement cost of all ten could range from six to ten million dollars or sorry, per centre. So times ten. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. I have no other names. Any other questions for members? Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The college's 2025-2026 capital estimate included 300,000 in capital funding for infrastructure technology. As of today, how much of this funding has been spent? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair. If the committee will allow, I would like the president to answer that question. *Nakurmiik*.

Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Price.

Ms. Price: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for his question. Over the last five years, the college has put significant effort into developing its information technology efforts and division. While we have this committed funding from the Government of Nunavut, the college also seeks third-party funding to supplement its efforts. For the current fiscal year we anticipate full use of that budget, and look forward to the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: My apologies for that. Thank you for your reply, Ms. Price. Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: What projects have been undertaken with this funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the follow-up question. The funds are used to replace computers and laptops, routers, and upgrading the network to improve services for students and faculty in the community learning centres.

One example is some of the computers that are in use are from 2016, and recognizing how quickly technology changes and improves, such devices are significantly out of date. We want to make sure that our students and faculty have access to improved technology. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you Mr. Chair, and thank you for the answer. My last question is the college proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates includes 300,000 capital funding for infrastructure technology. What projects are planned for the upcoming 2026-2027 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the follow-up question. For 2026-2027, it's a continuation of the efforts from 2025-2026. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you for your response, Acting Minister Healey Akearok. I have no other questions. Seeing none, do members agree with the Nunavut Arctic College Headquarter Branch capital expenditures of \$2,300,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree with the Nunavut Arctic College total capital expenditures of \$2,300,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with Nunavut Arctic College?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any closing comments, Acting Minister Healey Akearok?

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank the committee for their attention and for their questions. I especially want to thank the officials for Nunavut Arctic College who are here and who have been of tremendous assistance to me, and thank you all so much for your time. *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials, and we'll now take a five-minute break to get ready for Culture and Heritage. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 18:04 and resumed at 18:08*

Chairman: Thank you for returning. We'll reconvene our Committee of the Whole meeting here. We're dealing with Culture and Heritage. I would like to ask Minister Koonoo: Do you have officials you would like to have appear before the committee?

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do have officials here with me.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. For the record, Minister Koonoo, please introduce your officials and then proceed with your opening comments.

Hon. Brian Koonoo (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my colleagues. I'm pleased to appear before the committee to present department of Culture and Heritage 2026-2027 capital estimates.

With me today are my officials: Teresa Hughes, Deputy Minister; Jeannie Arreak-Kullualik, Assistant Deputy Minister; Christopher Lang, Director of Corporate Services; and Caroline Whittle, Director of Heritage.

The department is proposing \$1,500,000 for its capital estimates, which is allocated between the Heritage Facilities and the Library Facilities in the amounts of \$1 million and \$500,000 respectively. This funding is administered through application-based grants and contributions programs.

Both programs are distributed through the department's *Grants and Contributions Policy* to non-profit organizations and municipal corporations. These programs are scaled to support improvement to existing facilities or to help leverage other funding for new facilities.

Mr. Chair, I will be pleased to respond to any questions that members of this committee may have during or at the end of this presentation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Does a member of the Regular Members' Caucus have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Regular Members' Cacus concerning its review of the 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Culture and Heritage.

Members note that the department's proposed capital budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is \$1.5 million. This is for its ongoing Heritage Facilities funding and Public Libraries Facilities funding. The amount requested by the department remains unchanged from its 2025-2026 capital budget.

Members note that the department has allocated \$1 million for its Heritage Facilities Grants and Contribution funding program. The department's capital contribution program is allocated to non-profit community-based organizations and municipal corporations for the development or renovation of heritage facilities and relevant associated equipment. Members notes that the department's previously approved 2025-2026 capital estimates indicated that a total of 44 community entities have received funding through these agreements since the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Members note that the 2026-2027 capital estimates did not include updated information on how many entities received funding from the department. Members encourage the department to continue to include the total number of entities that received funding from the department's grants and contribution funding programs.

Members also note that the department has allocated \$500,000 for its Public Library Facilities Grants and Contribution funding program. This funding is intended to assist in the modernization of existing public libraries. During the minister's recent appearance, members raised the issue of a new Nunavut Heritage Centre. Members recognize that this is a major project that is currently in the planning phase and look forward to receiving ongoing updates on the status of this important work.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Department of Culture and Heritage. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. We'll now proceed to a page by page review of the capital estimates starting on page F-3.

Culture and Heritage Directorate Branch, capital total expenditures, \$1,500,000. We'll now review the Department of Culture and Heritage Directorate Branch. Do members have any questions? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you give us an update in regards to the new heritage centre that's supposed to be built. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the current heritage centre is in the plans right now. It's not finalized, but we're still in the discussion phase. The land, the lease right, now there's trying to acquire funding at the moment with different organizations for contribution.

So the Government of Canada has submitted \$50 million, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated have submitted \$10 million, while KIA submitted \$5 million, and Qikiqtani Inuit Organization has submitted \$5 million. That's the financial commitments for the Inuit Heritage Centre. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Any other questions? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Culture and Heritage -- sorry, go ahead, Mr. Kuliktana.

Mr. Kuliktana: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note the new heritage centre is still in the works, but what is the timeline for the plans starting for the new heritage centre? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now it's still in the planning stage, and we're trying to have, we need to develop an MOU with the Inuit heritage orgs and the Government of Nunavut. In order to proceed, we need to have first establish the MOU, and after that we'll have more development and we'll do that. It's going to be decision between the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Mr. Kuliktana? You're done? Okay, thank you. Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. Your department's approved 2025-2026 capital project substantiation sheet indicated that four facilities received a combined total of \$700,000 in capital contribution funding during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. How many facilities received funding during the current 2025-2026 fiscal year, and in what amounts? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just bear with me. We're trying to get that information right now, as we speak. Just hold on few seconds. Almost there. Sorry.

Right now for 2025-2026, heritage org facilities for funding, there's four that, 2025-2026 heritage facilities, there's three facilities that are Kitikmeot Heritage Society; ArtCirq, that's Igloodik; and Kitikmeot Heritage Society.

And he asked how many facilities there are. There are three facilities, Kuugalaaq Cultural Campus Facility, Kamayuk (ph) 2025 creating Inuinnaqtun-focused facilities for the May Hakongak Centre; that's Kitikmeot Heritage Society. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Koonoo. Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you for that response. Thank you, Chair. To date what proposals have been submitted to your department for heritage facility's funding during the current 2025-2026 fiscal year? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Mr. Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Could you repeat that. What year, what fiscal year are you asking about?

Chairman: Mr. Kablutsiak.

Mr. Kablutsiak: Thank you, Chair. I'll repeat the question. To date what proposals have been submitted to your department for heritage facilities funding during the current 2025-2026 fiscal year? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Koonoo.

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm going to direct Teresa Hughes to answer that question, if you allow. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Go ahead, Ms. Hughes.

Ms. Hughes (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Annually we do show lists and hamlets and corporations, not-for-profit in particular, and we have fluctuations on funding proposals for heritage centres or museums.

Last year January 31 the applications closed, and now the application are just being reviewed. So we don't really have a number yet how many have given proposals, and we will see who has been approved and who has not been approved, and those who have not been approved could find out what reasons were given for not approving. Thank you, Mr. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I have no other questions. Do members agree with the Department of Culture and Heritage Directorate Branch, total capital expenditures of \$1,500,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree with the Department of Culture and Heritage total capital expenditures of \$1.5 million?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Culture and Heritage?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any closing comments, Minister Koonoo?

Hon. Brian Koonoo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation) Thank you for your review of the proposed estimates and further review what we discussed earlier. Unfortunately we cannot provide all the information, but again, we will continue to submit its support as Inuit language and culture is a priority in Nunavut, and we have to strengthen it here in Nunavut. Thank you for discussing this issue. Thank you. That's all.

Chairman: Thank you Minister Koonoo. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials out. We'll now take a 30-minute break, as the catering has been brought in, before we start with review of the Office of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 18:26 and resumed at 19:00

***** CHECK 99 7:00:48 p.m.*** (SORRY, I MISSED THE FIRST COMMENT BY THE CHAIR PEDERSEN)**

Chairman (Pedersen): Thanks, everyone, for coming back after the dinner break. We are continuing on with our committee of the whole meeting. We are now dealing the Office of the Legislative Assembly, Assembly Operations Branch. Total capital expenditures \$250,000. I would like to ask Mr. Speaker: Do you have officials you would like to have appear before the committee?

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, if you approve, yes.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. For the record, Mr. Speaker, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to be here before you. Here with me, our clerk, Stephen Innuksuk, whom you well know; and to my right, and Corporate Affairs Director Danielle Winmill at the Assembly. Thank you, Chair.

I am pleased to appear before you and members today to present the proposed 2026-2027 capital estimates of the Office of the Legislative Assembly. I am pleased to note that the proposed 2026-2027 minor capital budget of \$250,000 has not increased since the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Significant projects that have been undertaken during the current 2025-2026 fiscal year include carpet replacement in the Legislative Assembly and ongoing information technology and audiovisual upgrades.

Projects being planned for the upcoming 2026-2027 fiscal year include a major upgrade to the Legislative Assembly's heating and the building's – how do I say this – to have better air circulation and to rectify some of the maintenance and operations required at the Assembly. For example, administrative office furniture and so forth, that need changing, along with computers. These are my opening comments. If you have any questions, I will try and answer your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Starting on page A-3. Office of the Legislative Assembly, Assembly Operations Branch, total capital expenditures \$250,000. Do members have any questions? Seeing none, do members agree with the office of the Legislative Assembly total capital expenditures of \$250,000?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with the office of the Legislative Assembly?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Any closing comments, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank my staff at the legislature. We were very prepared. There are no questions asked, and I thank you all for approving the estimates for the \$250,000. Thank you. That is all.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: This concludes our Committee of the Whole meeting. I ask members to go to Bill 2 in your legislative binder.

Sorry. Oh, yes, sorry. Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you, you can escort the witnesses. Sorry about that.

Again, this concludes our Committee of the Whole meeting. I ask members to go to Bill 2 in your legislative binder. Thank you.

We'll reconvene our Committee of the Whole meeting. We agree to go clause by clause on Bill 2, *Appropriation Capital Act, 2026-2027*.

Bill 2, *Appropriation Capital Act, 2026-2027* clause 1; agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 3?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Schedule on page 2, schedule, amounts appropriated for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027, vote 2 capital, total capital appropriation \$373,217,000. All agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 4?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 6?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 2?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree to put Bill 2 on the *Orders of the Day* for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Brief closing comments. Premier Main? That's what it says on here.

>>*Laughter*

This now concludes our business of the House, and I'll now rise to report progress.

>>*Committee adjourned and House resumed at 19:07*

Speaker (interpretation): *Orders of the Day*, Item 20, Report of the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Pedersen.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Your committee has been considering Bill 2 and I would like to report that Bill 2 is concluded and is 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 (interpretation): There is a motion on the floor. Seconder? Mr. Simailak. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Main.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 2 – Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2026 2027 – Third Reading

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, that Bill 2, *Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2026-2027* be read for the third time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. All in favour? Opposed? And the motion is carried. Bill 2 can be assented.

Item number 22, *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Innuksuk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (interpretation): Thank you. We will have a meeting at 10 o'clock in the morning.

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 the Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters: Bills 1, 3, and 4
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. *Orders of the Day*.

Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): With the authority vested in me through Motion 11 –7(1), we will start again March 17 at 10 o'clock in the morning. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 19:11*

