



## 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 Akeegok**  
(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 Hickes**  
(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 Qammaniq**  
(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 Tattuinee**  
(Rankin Inlet South)

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

**Steven Taqtu**  
(Quttiktuq)

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Uqausirmit Uqausirmit Inc.

926 Sivumugiaq Street,  
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 3H0  
Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266  
Website: [www.assembly.nu.ca](http://www.assembly.nu.ca)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Friday, May 29, 2026**

**Members Present:**

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok, Ms. Hannah Angootealuk, Mr. Edward Attagutaluk, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanase, Mr. Jamie Kablutsiak, Mr. Gordon Kautuk, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall, Hon. John Main, Mr. Johnny Mike, Mr. Fred Pedersen, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Abraham Qammaniq, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Craig Simailak, Mr. Steven Taqtu, Hon. Annie Tattuinee.

>>*House commenced at 09:00*

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. David Joanase) (interpretation): Good morning. Before we start, Minister Simailak, if you can open the session with a prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): good morning, members and Nunavummiut. It's very beautiful weather here in Iqaluit today.

Before we start, I would like to congratulate my younger brother had a son. My younger brother had a baby son, so I congratulate him, 7 pounds 8 ounces.

Going to *Orders of the Day*, Item 2, Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Acting Government House Leader, Mr. Simailak.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 34 – 7(2): Ministers Absent from the House**

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning all. To the people in Baker Lake and Nunavut across, good morning. Hopefully you guys have a wonderful weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that the Hon. Janet Brewster will be absent from the House today, due to duty travel. Minister Koonoo will also be absent today due to illness. Minister George Hickes will be Acting Minister of Health during Minister Brewster's absence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister's Statements. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

**Minister's Statement 35 – 7(2): Appointment of RCMP Superintendent Simon McDermott**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share an important development for the Department of Justice and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police here in Nunavut.

It is my pleasure to welcome and announce the appointment of Superintendent Simon McDermott to the senior position of Criminal Operations Officer for Nunavut's Royal Canadian Mounted Police "V" Division.

Mr. Speaker, Simon is no stranger to Nunavut, having lived in Arviat, Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet and Iqaluit from 1974 to 1997. Simon graduated high school here in Iqaluit and after completing university, moved back to Pond Inlet where he was a schoolteacher prior to being a summer student with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and heading off to the RCMP Depot in Regina to start his policing career.

Mr. Speaker and Members, Since 1997, Superintendent McDermott has worked in seven different provinces and territories in Canada. Despite living elsewhere for almost thirty years, he still calls Nunavut home. Although he admits he is a bit out of practice, Simon is fluent in Inuktitut and looks forward to regaining his language skills.

Simon brings with him a vast knowledge of community policing, a personal understanding of Nunavut communities, and an appreciation for Inuit culture, language and traditions. He is committed to strengthening the bonds between the police and community as part of his new role.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Simon on his appointment as Criminal Operations Officer with the Nunavut "V" Division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and welcome him back to the territory.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I would like to recognize the other guests and officials that are accompanying Simon today. Welcome back home, Simon.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Tattuinee.

**Minister's Statement 36 – 7(2): Importance of Health and Safety in the Workplace**

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of health and safety in our public service. When employees feel safe, respected, and supported, they are able to deliver stronger, more effective programs and services to Nunavummiut. A safe workplace is not simply a requirement; it is the foundation of an effective government.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Human Resources is taking a leadership role in advancing occupational health and safety education, awareness, and standards across the territory.

During the week of May 4 to 8, in recognition of Safety Health Week, an awareness campaign was launched to promote workplace health, safety, and well-being. This initiative highlighted the importance of creating safe, respectful, and supportive work environments across all departments and communities.

Mr. Speaker, this year we are expanding supervisor occupational health and safety familiarization training in all regions. Ninety-three supervisors have already completed the training, and more sessions are underway. We are also reinforcing workplace hazardous materials information system training to ensure safe and informed handling practices.

This type of training is reinforced by standard and intermediate first aid training that was delivered to 217 participants across the territory, strengthening our collective ability to respond in emergencies and keep our workplaces and communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, prioritizing health and safety reflects Inuit societal values, caring for one another, working together, and creating environments where people can succeed. A healthy workplace supports both physical and psychological well being. It builds trust, reduces turnover, and sets a positive example for our communities. A safe public service is a strong public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 37 – 7(2): Gjoa Haven Staff and Community Recognition**

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the staff of Qulliq Energy Corporation for their dedication, perseverance, and professionalism in recently addressing the challenges involved with restoring power to the community of Gjoa Haven. The operation demonstrated the realities of delivering critical services in Nunavut where weather, distance, and limited access can significantly impact urgent response efforts.

Mr. Speaker, in early April, a crew travelled from Iqaluit to assist with restoration work in Gjoa Haven. The crew included powerline technicians Darren Ryan and Jordon Rothkop, Electrician Jules Pineau, and electrical technologist Mark-Evin Asongwe Taniform.

Weather made the trip difficult. Over the course of the day, the team attempted to land six times, but was turned back by blizzard conditions and diverted to Taloyoak. The following day, they tried again and were unable to reach the community. Some crew members spent the night at the airport, while others rested in transient accommodations. They reached Gjoa Haven on the third day and began work on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of effort is typical of Qulliq Energy Corporation employees, who at times work in difficult and unpredictable conditions to restore essential services. The job depends on teamwork and adaptability, and our staff bring both.

I would also like to thank the corporation's staff who reside in Gjoa Haven for their quick response and dedication. Thank you, Superintendent Andrew Porter, Assistant Operator Brendan Jewell, and Relief Operator Liam Qamukkaq.

I am also grateful to our airline partners and the support staff who kept operations moving throughout the trip. Their work made the restoration possible.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the residents of Gjoa Haven, who supported one another while their power was being restored. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Simailak, Minister of Community Services.

### **Minister's Statement 38 – 7(2): Recognizing Nunavut Filmmakers at the Canadian Screen Awards**

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate several outstanding Nunavut filmmakers and artists whose work has received national recognition through this year's Canadian Screen Awards.

Mr. Speaker, these nominations reflect the tremendous talent, creativity, and vision that exist across Nunavut and demonstrate the growing impact of Inuit storytelling within Canada's cultural landscape.

I would like to congratulate Stacey Aglok MacDonald and Alethea Arnaquq-Baril on the remarkable success of *North of North*, which received 20 Canadian Screen Award nominations, including recognition for Best Comedy Series and outstanding performances by Nunavut talent. This achievement represents an important milestone not only for the creators involved, but also for Nunavut's growing film and television industry.

I would also like to recognize Zacharias Kunuk, whose lifelong commitment to Inuit storytelling continues to inspire audiences around the world. Mr. Kunuk's film, *Uiksaringitara – Wrong Husband* received multiple Canadian Screen Award nominations, including Achievement in Direction and acting nominations for Theresia Kappianaq and Leah Panimera.

I would also like to congratulate Louise Flaherty for her nomination for the animated short film *Mangittatuarjuq: The Gnawer of Rocks*, which highlights the richness and creativity of Inuit storytelling across different forms of media.

Mr. Speaker, these achievements are a source of pride for Nunavummiut. They demonstrate the importance of Inuit story-telling and show how Nunavut voices continue to connect with audiences across Canada and internationally.

The growing recognition of Nunavut filmmakers all creates meaningful opportunities for employment, skills development, cultural promotion, and economic growth within our communities.

To all the nominees and creators, thank you for your dedication, creativity, and leadership. Your work continues to inspire the next generation of storytellers across Nunavut.

Ma'na, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Acting Minister of Education, Mr. Main.

**Minister's Statement 39 – 7(2): Uliut Iksiktaaryuk 50 Years' Service in the Department of Education**

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues. Great that we have another day to live.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a long-term Department of Education employee, Uliut Iksiktaaryuk. She has done much work in her lifetime in the area of education, teaching children language and their environment, in effort to support her community. This past year the Government of Nunavut recognizes the contribution she has made, using her life experience for the benefit of children and people.

Mr. Speaker, Uliut began her working for the Department of Education in August 1974 in Baker Lake as a classroom assistant. Since then, she continued her education here in Iqaluit, and also went to Fort Smith for further education, and in Rankin Inlet, and finally moved to Qamani'tuaq, back home, as a teacher. For years she taught in Qamani'tuaq, Baker Lake. She also worked within the Keewatin region, in the area of school operations for 13 years, in support of different schools and communities in outlying communities.

Her experience and her career is based on Inuit culture, language, resilience, and perseverance that she lived herself. Ms. Uliut has always known who she is, as an Inuk, a woman, and a lady who grew up on the land. She has gone through incredible changes that she felt and experienced the change. She remembers as a child growing up and remembers the RCMP, who once paid them a visit out on the land, and were told they had to move to the community of Baker Lake.

Inuktitut has always been her base in her lifetime, and for many years she taught of teaching individuals with Inuit culture and language within the school atmosphere, while always giving supporting to her colleagues, how education may be provided better and how guidelines may be improved. She is a believer and believes in harmony within the school atmosphere. It has been her priority, based on her experience in previous years, and personal experience.

Many individuals in in Baker Lake who have gone through school have been much touched Uliut having taught them for years. In fact, she began teaching the children and grandchildren of her former students. Her daughter Siobhan, she taught herself, and she taught her grandchildren. She has seen many changes over the years in Nunavut, and changes in the classroom. Despite all the changes, she has always moved forward, and remained persistent to ensure Inuktitut and her culture is in the forefront.

On behalf of Rachel Arnngnamaktiq Elementary School and the teachers in the school, we thank Uliut and we thank her for her big contribution for 50 years, and leading, and being very conscientious for children and within Nunavut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Minister Hickes.

### **Minister's Statement 40 – 7(2): Bulk Fuel Infrastructure and Capacity Expansion**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, petroleum products remain fundamental to Nunavut's energy system, supporting aviation, automotive transportation, home heating, industry, and electricity generation across our territory. Mr. Speaker, As Nunavut continues to grow, reliable fuel infrastructure and storage capacity remain critical to supporting our communities and economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure is currently advancing major fuel infrastructure planning work in several communities. In Arviat, planning continues for a new bulk fuel facility to address long-term capacity pressures and code compliance requirements. Following technical review and community engagement, a preferred site was approved by hamlet council in April 2026, allowing the project to advance toward detailed design and permitting. In Taloyoak, feasibility work is underway to assess options for either expansion of the existing facility or development of a new location to meet future fuel storage requirements.

Mr. Speaker and Members, the department has also substantiated major fuel infrastructure upgrade projects in Naujaat and, more recently, in Rankin Inlet as part of ongoing efforts to address long-term growth, operational pressures, and future fuel storage requirements across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the department has also substantiated code compliance projects in Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, Qikiqtarjuaq, Kinngait, Kugluktuk, and Kugaaruk, while federally funded projects continue in several communities to upgrade pipelines, shore manifolds, and marine transfer safety equipment.

The Petroleum Products Division also continues advancing smaller practical capacity expansions across the territory. This includes adding and relocating tanks, upgrading existing infrastructure, and continuing tank inspection and certification work to help communities manage growing fuel demand. Mr. Speaker and Members, this year the division is planning to relocate six horizontal storage tanks to Arviat and three additional tanks to Grise Fiord to help stabilize fuel supply.

Mr. Speaker, these projects are critical to ensuring Nunavut's fuel infrastructure keeps pace with the growth of our communities and the increasing demands being placed on our energy system. As our territory continues to grow, we must continue exploring

practical and innovative approaches to strengthen and sustain this critical infrastructure for the long term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Kuliktana.

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

#### **Member's Statement 47 – 7(2): Kugluktuk Graduates**

**Mr. Kuliktana:** I would say I would say good morning to all my constituents in Kugluktuk. Today is a special day for ten graduating students in Kugluktuk today. I would like to congratulate them for their commitment in reaching the milestone today in grade 12.

Today I want to recognize and acknowledge the parents of the graduating students. Not only the graduating students, but all parents right across Nunavut communities. Without their commitment and to make sure that child goes to, reach their education every day. And especially without their tough love; I know I have, we've all been there before, I know there are some days I don't feel like going to school. I'd say I was having a headache, but parents always know.

So I would like to acknowledge them today for their commitment and their love to ensure that their children's dreams are being met and all the children reach their milestones, not only in grade 12 but in their life and in their future endeavours.

I would like to acknowledge all the parents today for their love and commitment that they have for their children. I would like the House to celebrate and acknowledge all the parents with me today in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Cambridge Bay MLA, Mr. Pedersen.

#### **Member's Statement 48 – 7(2): Happy Birthday to Mom**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you all and to those in Cambridge Bay watching on TV and online. I know my mother is one of them, as she is keenly interested in the happenings of this Assembly and the current events happening across Nunavut.

I'm not sure if you all know, but she was the first Inuk female ever elected to the Legislative Assembly when Nunavut was still a part of the NWT. Back then the riding was called the Central Arctic Riding, and it was composed of the communities between and Ulukhaktok and Kugaaruk.

Mr. Speaker, as we won't be sitting on Sunday, May 31, I would like to take this opportunity to wish her happy 86th birthday, and to say that I'll share a piece of cake with her when I return to Cambridge Bay after this sitting.

And I also want to take this time to congratulate Mr. David Nivingalok of Kugluktuk on being elected yesterday as the new vice-president of economic development for the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you as well. Members' Statements. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

#### **Member's Statement 49 – 7(2): Nunavut Land Use Plan**

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I have several comments concerning Nunavut territory and the land plans.

We know this, and I also negotiated the land claims, part of the Land Claims Agreement as a young man, at age 30, I believe, when we were aspiring for Nunavut in service of the community of Pangnirtung. The agreement, one very important component that was signed in the 1990s and also an agreement that is one of the largest land size within Canada.

There are many concerns that are not voiced in Nunavut, so I will try to say my piece regarding the planning process that we are still working on today.

In the month of May last year, (interpretation ends) as of May 2025, more than half of Nunavut, 52,000 square kilometres of mining claims were staked in the previous two years, with close to 15,000 square metres of mining claims staked in limited-use zone proposed for protection under the plan.

(interpretation) There are many details here, Mr. Speaker, and concerns that we now see that were very important before Nunavut Land Use Plan; two examples of sites, Hope Bay Gold mine and Gray's Bay Port Road Project.

We don't have a Nunavut Land Use Plan as of yet. I'm not opposed to developments, however, Mr. Chairman, if I can have my comments extended, I'm asking.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The MLA is asking to extend his member's comments. Any nays? Hearing none, Mr. Mike, continue.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): What I'm trying to state is: There are many individuals that do not know of this process and the plans there are within Nunavut, and without any real directive, and alongside development taking place prior to the Nunavut Land Use Plan being implemented. This is a question to the appropriate minister today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Members' Statements. I have no more names. Moving on. Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

#### **Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions**

##### **Return to Oral Question 24 – 7(2): Airport Infrastructure**

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to an oral question a member asked, the Member for Aggu, regarding airport infrastructure in his community.

Mr. Speaker, on May 25, the Member for Aggu asked questions on the timing of work the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure had planned for the Igloolik Airport. Mr. Speaker, I did not have those details in front of me at the time but committed to get these answers back to the member.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Airports Division has staff in Igloolik this week, conducting their annual summer inspection of the airport. Their primary focus is on the operational parts of the airport, but they will also be inspecting the buildings.

Mr. Speaker, the division is also currently reviewing a consultant's proposal for a technical building assessment, and they expect to have a contract signed in the coming weeks and a final report completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, the member also asked about the status of the Igloolik airfield overlay design. The project for that has been initiated. The field work will be completed when the snow is on the ground, and we expect the design report by early spring. The building assessment report and the airfield overlay design will both be used to update the airport capital needs assessment, and to develop a priorities list and business cases for the highest priority projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Returns to Oral Questions. Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Healey Akearok.

### **Return to Oral Question 31 – 7(2): Gjoa Haven Power Plant**

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to supplement an answer I gave during question period on May 25, 2026 concerning Mr. Porter's question about renewable resources at Gjoa Haven's new power plant.

The new power plant in Gjoa Haven will incorporate the latest technology and will be capable of connecting renewable energy projects to the grid. While the new equipment and the design can integrate renewable energy, additional equipment is required to make this a reality. That additional equipment is provided by entities that submit proposals for commercial and institutional power producer or independent power producer programs for renewable energy projects in Gjoa Haven. To date, Qulliq Energy Corporation has only received net metering applications from the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): *Orders of the Day*. Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in my statement, I wanted to take the right opportunity to recognize a few people that are joining us in the gallery here today.

Although my colleague from Iqaluit-Manirajak recognized Noel and Kate McDermott earlier this week, I want to bring special attention to their attendance, as it gave me an opportunity to celebrate their return to Nunavut for their son Simon McDermott, now Superintendent Simon McDermott, here in "V" Division.

Mr. Speaker, along with Simon joining is the chief superintendent, Kent Pike, obviously not a stranger to this House; he has been here a few times. I would like to thank him again for his continued work on service in Nunavut. I know it's a challenging jurisdiction, and I know it has brought forward with all the professionalism that it deserves.

Joining also is Sergeant Sam Munden (ph). I think it is very important to acknowledge the work that 'V' Division does in trying times, and celebration. I do get notes from community members on how RCMP members are integrated into the community, and working and celebrating, during different events, and supporting local initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, obviously I would like to recognize Assistant Deputy Minister Andrew Blackadar to the House, again, not a stranger.

But I just wanted to take this moment to really celebrate Noel and Kate McDermott. I know your life here in Nunavut, you contributed greatly. My colleague from Iqaluit-Manirajak outlined that very clearly the other day. I just wanted to thank you again for returning back to Nunavut and letting us borrow your son for a few years. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Please welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names on my list.

Item 6, *Orders of the Day*, Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Pedersen.

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

#### **Oral Question 55 – 7(2): Inuit Employment**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister of Human Resources and are a follow-up to questions I previously asked regarding Inuit employment within this government.

As she knows, we want to see a level of Inuit employment that is representative to the population of Inuit in Nunavut, and that level is still hovering around the area of 85 per cent.

Currently, to meet that level, every single vacant position today would have to be filled by Inuit hires. We know that is not possible; we still need many Inuit trained in school to fill professional-level positions within all of our departments.

Mr. Speaker, my first question to the minister is: Does your department currently have any plans in place on how this government can realistically start to meet the goal of a representative work force? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Currently the Government of Nunavut does have a master Inuit employment plan, which requires each of the departments to establish their own Inuit employment plans with certain goals and requirements to work towards a representative work force and Inuit employment. Some departments are in the process of developing that.

We've also got several programs that encourage individual employees to pursue post-secondary education to work up towards hiring positions within the government. We also have public service training initiatives that provide training and skills that would allow them to move from, ladder up in every position within the government.

And we also hired an associate deputy minister responsible specifically for Inuit employment, and plans to ensure that we are going to start keeping track of and then holding each of the departments accountable, because they do have their own organizational charts and they do have their own plans in terms of hiring and whatnot. So thank you for the question. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the answer, Minister.

I recently attended a few post-secondary graduation ceremonies since I have been elected, and I look forward to attending more of them.

I'm aware that the Government of Nunavut advertises jobs in the newspapers online and on various social media platforms. I'm wondering if the Department of Human Resources reaches out directly to post-secondary graduates to inform them of vacancies in their chosen field of study. Can the minister confirm if this happens? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I think more recently, while in Ottawa in January, we had an opportunity to speak with Nunavut Sivuniksavut students and talk to them about employment opportunities and maybe where we may need additional, or consideration for what post-secondary education they would like to pursue.

We get over 2 million visits on our websites annually from students across Canada and from post-secondary students looking for employment in Nunavut.

I can't specifically say in terms of the numbers of Inuit students, but I think it's something that we as a government should pursue, and working with the Department of Education and Family Services to determine if there are opportunities and seek permission because of privacy legislation to be able to contact those individuals.

I hope that answers your question, Mr. Pedersen, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This House just recently approved a big increase to the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students Program, so I'm hopeful we will see a greater number of our grade 12 graduates attending post-secondary education programs. I also understand that changes have been made to the Summer Student Employment Program.

Can the minister inform us: How many students have been hired so far for this year's program, and what steps are being taken to encourage students to do so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The summer student program, we've augmented it for students to be able to have employment throughout the year, not just in the summer months. Over the last several years we have had over 200 students pursuing employment, summer employment within government.

In terms of specific applications this year, I'll have to get back to you on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Oral Question 56 – 7(2): Nunavut Land Use Plan**

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have more questions today for the Minister of Environment, but I will direct the question to the premier regarding the Nunavut Land Use Plan.

Mr. Speaker, it is well-known that the Nunavut Land Use Plan has recommendations made by the Nunavut Planning Commission. Mr. Speaker, I would to thank the minister for the detailed return that he provided during yesterday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, the minister's return indicated that the government continues to work collaboratively with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in the review of the recommended Land Use Plan.

(interpretation ends) Now that Nunavut Tunngavik has elected a new president, can the minister or premier confirm when he will be meeting with her to resume the work.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Nunavut Planning Commission has been working on the Nunavut Land Use Plan, which the previous government had been working on. We know that there are many, many people out there waiting for the Nunavut Land Use Plan. It started in 2023 and we're working quite hard on reviewing the matter. It's not at a standstill. We are working on it with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, on an occasional basis, and also the federal government, because it's going to be three signatories to this Land Use Plan.

Gloria Uluqsi, I don't know when we'll be having our first meeting. We haven't made any plans, but there are quite a number of items that we would like to talk about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): First supplementary question. Member Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Premier. I want to say that the plan right now, or the planning that has been done, and there has been recommendations that have been around for a while, since 1993.

This is the largest land claim in the history of Canada, and we have to try and manage the largest piece of land in Canada. I can see how difficult it can be, and I don't think in Canada's history there has ever been work to control that much land.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's return indicated (interpretation ends) that "the government of Canada is leading additional consultations with Indigenous governments and organizations."

(interpretation) Is it worded like that? They have to consider the Keewatin border, that has never really been settled? (interpretation ends) Can the minister confirm: Which other Indigenous governments and organizations are part of this project? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. The Nunavut government does have, as the member alluded to in his question or stated in his question, the Nunavut government does have a duty to consult on this decision. We must fulfill that duty to consult. It's not an optional requirement for us, and it's a requirement that we take very seriously. Those joint Crown consultations are ongoing in terms of Indigenous governments and organizations.

I can say I'm not going to spell out which group we're focused on right now. I can say that there have been numerous parties consulted as part of this, and some consultations are further ahead than others. But we are, as I mentioned in my previous response, the work does continue.

We are working. It might not seem like it to folks in the public or to folks in the stakeholder groups, but we are working hard, and we're trying to come to a solid decision based on numerous factors. If you look at any single project, as the member mentioned, this is a very large plan, the largest in the world, potentially. You look at a single mining project or a single development project, exploration, just the amount of debate and the amount of discussion that can be centred around a single project.

We are talking about one-fifth of Canada's land mass here. The bigger the area, the bigger the potential list of issues to work through. We are working hard, and we're seeking to align our decision with the other signatories wherever possible. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. We are members of the Legislative Assembly of today's government, and we have responsibilities to work on the NPC, the Land Use Plan and the recommendations.

Nunavut has a lot of resources, and there are mines that have been established in Nunavut. And about half of Nunavut, there are mining companies interested in about half of Nunavut for their resources. And we have to protect the land in the plan.

With mining, the 15,000 square kilometres of land has been worked on by the mines. It's a lot of land. And the NPC recommendations, it's going to be three years that the plan has been worked on since it was announced and work is being done by the Canadian government, Nunavut government, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

I agree with the premier that it's very difficult to work on, and maybe I should just add devolution to the conversation. And that will affect the land within Nunavut as well, the land that we manage. I know, we know that it's very difficult work that has to be done, and that's fine; we have to do that hard work in order to progress things.

If the minister can provide a clear timeline for when the review process will conclude; that's my question to the premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As to when the process will conclude, we don't know that yet, and the consultations that we have to do looking at them. Each party has to do their own consultations, but we have taken the responsibility as government, because we know that the Nunavut people are really eager to hear what's happening with the process, and we're trying to do it in the shortest way possible.

Looking at the details of the plan, it is difficult work. It's not an easy job. But the members, although I can't divulge every information to the members, we're trying to do the process as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Qammaniq.

### **Oral Question 57 – 7(2): Activities of the Qulliq Energy Corporation**

**Mr. Qammaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

I would like to begin by congratulating the corporation and the Nunavut Employees Union for having successfully reached a tentative collective agreement. I would like to ask the minister if the minister can clarify the extent to which the cost of the new agreement will impact the corporation's budget and the monthly power rates that it charges customers.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. We are again delighted that that tentative agreement has been reached between QEC and NEU for the benefit of our employees.

The rates are set by the Utility Rates Council, which is a separate entity that's not under Qulliq. It's one of the portfolios of my colleagues. And so those rates are set by a different entity, and then Qulliq Energy Corporation implements them under their guidance. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: First supplementary question, Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq** (interpretation): Thank you. Now, as the minister is aware, the Qulliq Energy Corporation commissioned a project last year to assess the condition of a number of power plants in the territory, including the Sanirajak power plant. And as the minister is aware, Sanirajak's power plant was built over 50 years ago. It is a member of the half-century club.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Member Qammaniq, can you proceed to your question?

**Mr. Qammaniq** (interpretation): My apologies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) A number of my colleagues have been asking the Minister questions about the Qulliq Energy Corporation's request that the Government of Canada "take over" the corporation's historical debt. I have not heard a clear answer yet, so I will try again today. Has the Government of Canada said yes to this request or has the Government of Canada said no to this request?

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

As the member identified, we are aware that we have 10 first-generation power plants that need to be replaced, and four of those are currently under construction. Of the remaining six, Sanirajak is on the priority list.

What we know is energy is at the core of everything we are doing. It's at the core of our conversations around Arctic security and human security; that also means energy security.

We are working with our colleagues in the federal government to raise this issue with every department, with every minister that we have the opportunity to meet with.

We're bringing our plan for the scalable, modular, hybrid power plants forward to every possible partner that we can work with in our government, to address the debt that is part of constructing the four power plants currently, and also acquiring additional funds to address the six that are waiting in the wings that we know need urgent replacement, which does include Sanirajak. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Qammaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh, I skipped a page in my question. I was going to ask the first question and I skipped it.

(interpretation ends) Earlier this week, the minister provided information to the Legislative Assembly which indicated that the report on the Sanirajak assessment is expected to be completed in mid-August.

Will the minister commit to providing a copy of the assessment report to the municipal council of Sanirajak and the community's member of the Legislative Assembly?  
*Qujannamiik.*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question. We will make all of the information available that we can share with the community and with the member as soon as its available. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: Oral Questions. Mr. Kablutsiak, Member for Aggu.

### **Oral Question 58 – 7(2): Marine Infrastructure**

**Mr. Kablutsiak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My line of questions will be related to marine infrastructure and bulk fuel resupply.

My questions today are for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. As the minister will recall, I tabled a document in the House during last Thursday's sitting concerning the proposed Aqqiumavvik Seabed Mapping Project. Information provided by the project proponent indicates that "the coastal waters of the west Hudson Bay become increasingly precarious due to warming climate, reduced precipitation and very high rates of post-glacial annual rebound. Arviat experiences some of the highest rates of post-glacial annual rebound in the world. This creates navigational challenges for small boats and local harvesters, but it is an increasingly dangerous situation for larger ships having to approach the community."

Mr. Speaker, the Aqqiumavvik Society has requested support from the Canadian Hydrographic Service and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to accomplish the mapping project. Mr. Speaker, I fully support this project. Can the minister confirm that his department formally supports and endorses this important work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward there issue. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that accurate information is critical to ensuring safe passage and off-loading vessels, and to minimize impact on harvesting activities.

Mr. Speaker, I was copied on correspondence from the director general of the Canadian Hydrographic Services with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and through that office, the request was passed on to their Ontario, Prairies, and Arctic team to look at the scope of work and assess potential alignment with planned programs and activities, such as the upcoming undersea mapping study planned on behalf of the West Hudson Fibre-Link Project.

So Mr. Speaker, to shorten my answer: Yes, we are in support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his response. Information provide by the project proponent indicates that:

“The community is expanding at a rate that makes it difficult for sufficient fuel resupply. Due to the sharply shallowing waters, fuel resupply ships can no longer come in fully loaded. At low tide the ships actually sit on the seabed. This is an environmental concern. Since Arviat can no longer receive full loads of fuel, the result is several partial loads coming in across the shipping season. Currently the manifold of the resupply is located near the Northern store, midway into the inlet. Because the ship can no longer fully enter the inlet, the length of the resupply line is long. This requires a longer time to pump. The hope is to move the manifold further to the east along the shoreline. For efficiency, it would be best located close to the site of the new tank farm.”

Can the minister indicate how his department’s Petroleum Products Division is responding to these concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for following up on this issue. It has been ongoing for a number of years. There were some discussions on site selection, which I mentioned in my minister’s statement earlier today, but the current site was decided upon just in April, just last month, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognize the challenges of providing sealift services into all of our communities, and I would like to recognize the work of the hamlet in securing oceans protection funding from Transport Canada Oceans Protection Plan to look at actually the improvement and expansion of the sealift lay-down area. There will be a new access roadway, a boulder barrier to separate sealift area from the community boat launch, which will help in some of the issues that the member mentioned, with construction set to begin this summer.

Mr. Speaker, with regards to the fuel tank in that location, that subsequent decision on that location will actually determine where and how we put the bollards in place and the manifolds to make sure that fuel resupply is as unencumbered as possible.

One of the concerns that has been raised over the past, because of the capacity, ships were having to come in later in the year, which were impacting ice conditions for hunters and travellers, and brought a little bit more challenge to the sealift resupply by having to go in so late in the year.

With the increased capacity that we're anticipating from the new tank farm, hopefully we can avoid those late-season fuel deliveries, because we'll have enough capacity in the community to meet the ongoing demand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Second and final supplementary question, Member Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister provide an update on the timeline for construction of Arviat's new tank farm? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now that the site has been determined, we don't have to start from scratch. There was a significant amount of work that was been put into the design previously, so it's just a matter of updating some of the design, which we intend to have completed by late this summer, going out to tender this fall and hopefully construction starting next summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker (interpretation):** Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

### **Oral Question 59 – 7(2): Airport Infrastructure**

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have questions for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, Sanikiluaq's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan identifies a number of issues with the community's current airport infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, as the minister might be aware, there have been a number of incidents at the airport over the past decade, and there are concerns that the current east-west orientation of the airport's runway poses safety concerns. The community's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan indicates that a new runway which is oriented in a north-south direction would address these concerns, given the community's prevailing winds.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: Can he provide an update on how his department is addressing this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, sorry, I'm on the wrong page. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So when we're looking at the airfield in Sanikiluaq, I think it's important to recognize that when we do our airport assessments, it encompasses a number of different factors, such as some of the issues that the member has brought up. One of the things that we're looking at right now is we're looking at making sure that that assessment, which is expected to take place this summer, Mr. Speaker, will encompass a lot of the concerns that the member is raising, and then will direct myself and our officials on a path forward to mitigate some of the concerns that the member has raised. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your first supplementary question, Member Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the assessment report.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, the *Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in March 2023. The document identifies a number of potential improvements to Sanikiluaq's existing airport infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Legislative Assembly approved the department's 2026-2027 capital estimates. I was pleased to have voted in favour of the funding to undertake an airfield lighting replacement assessment.

I would like to ask the minister if he can provide an update on the status of this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the member is correct that there was an expenditures under a minor capital in the 2026-2027, so that would go out to tender, and then the work would be completed upon the tender being awarded, as well as the assessment again and will help consider other, any future amendments, any capital expenditures that may be needed for that airport, whether it be the runway or the terminal itself.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say to that is that the work is underway. We just started our new fiscal year as of April 1, so at that point, then the department goes to our other officials on the procurement side of things to make sure that we get that contract awarded. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Kuliktana.

**Oral Question 60 – 7(2): Health Infrastructure**

**Mr. Kuliktana** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Acting Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on questions that I asked last week concerning health infrastructure.

During last Friday's sitting of the House, members were informed that the construction of a new Aqquariaq Recovery Centre is underway.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the day-to-day management of the construction contract falls under the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Can the Acting Minister of Health indicate what information and updates he has received from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure concerning the timeline of the completion of the construction of the Aqquariaq Recovery Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Acting Minister of Health, Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for asking that question. I get to wear another hat that I've previously worn today, and as I was joking with some of my colleagues the other day, none of my hats are made of tinfoil, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member. I think it's a very important project that has had some delays over the course of its construction. We are looking at substantial completion later this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kuliktana**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for your response.

As the Acting Minister of Health is very much aware, the new Kitikmeot long-term care facility will be constructed in Cambridge Bay. We are hopeful that this will significantly improve care for our elders.

Can the Acting Minister of Health indicate what information and update he has received from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure concerning the procurement process for this new facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Health, Acting Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank the member for bringing this issue forward. I think it's important to keep people up to date on planned projects, especially with regards to elder care.

Mr. Speaker, it was mentioned in the House previously that there were some issues with the original site selection, so at that time we had to temporarily stall or halt our design until the new site is selected. Our officials have been working with the hamlet of Cambridge Bay very closely on identifying some alternate sites, and we're looking forward to that final decision being made so that we can continue with the design and hopefully get out for tender later this fall, as early as that, is what we're shooting for.

I know the premier and I have had numerous discussions on this project, along with Minister Brewster, on doing everything we can to accelerate that project. We recognize that there are challenges with our construction season, but we have done it in the past where we've constructed significant pieces of infrastructure in a very short period of time.

We are working very closely with my cabinet colleagues to expedite this project as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Second and final supplementary, Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for your response. I am confident that the acting minister will agree with me when I say the major construction projects like the Aqqusariaq Recovery Centre and Kitikmeot Long-Term Care facility provide opportunities for Inuit employment and apprenticeship.

Can the Acting Minister of Health indicate what information and updates he has received from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure concerning the government's plan for Inuit labour requirements for the construction of the Kitikmeot Long-Term Care Facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Acting Minister of Health, Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again, I thank the member for this question. I think it's very important to recognize with the centre here in Iqaluit that is under construction as it was taken over by Arctic Fresh, their Inuit employment numbers are exceptional across the territory, and I would recognize the success that they have been utilizing under their model of training and developing staff from Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, with regards to the project in Cambridge Bay, those papers or those tender documents, the design hasn't been finalized yet.

When we go into a community with a major piece of infrastructure, we take a look at what local workforce is available, other competing projects. We want to make sure that we are maximizing the impact on local employment.

Those numbers do fluctuate by community and even by year, sometimes, Mr. Speaker, depending upon how much activity is going on in the community. But I can assure all members that we work very hard with our contractors to make sure that they not only meet the minimum standards that we're requesting, but can actually take advantage and exceed the minimum expectations. And we strongly encourage that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Hudson Bay MLA, Mr. Qavvik.

### **Oral Question 61 – 7(2): Nunavut Teacher Education Program**

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me a second time. I would like to ask the Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents are interested in the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, and my community of Sanikiluaq has been seeking for that program to be offered in Sanikiluaq.

I would like to ask the minister whether the Nunavut Arctic College has found and secured a suitable classroom space to provide the Nunavut Teacher Education Program in Sanikiluaq. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Nunavut Arctic College Acting Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

The Nunavut Teacher Education Program is a very important program to the college, because the goal of this program is to graduate more bilingual teachers to work in our education system.

I'm happy to report to the member that for the 2026-2027 academic year, NTEP is currently recruiting new cohorts in Sanikiluaq, and as well as several other communities, including Grise Fiord, Rankin Inlet, and Gjoa Haven. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): First supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the update.

Mr. Speaker, our current Nunavut Arctic College in Sanikiluaq is a stand-alone building that offers only one program at a time, and during the life of this Assembly I have not seen any capital commitments towards a new Nunavut Arctic College.

I would like to ask the minister: Can she commit to bringing forward a capital appropriation for a new Nunavut Arctic College for Sanikiluaq? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Acting Minister of Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question. I don't have details at the moment around the capital plans for the Nunavut Arctic College, but I can commit to getting information to the member and sharing the perspective, as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. I have no more names to our agenda. Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Replies to Budget Address. Item 11, Petitions. Item 12, Responses to Petitions. Item 13, Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 14, Tabling of Documents. Item 15, Notices of Motions. Item 16, Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17, Motions. Item 18, First Reading of Bills. Item 19, Second Reading of Bills. Item 20, Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters.

Before moving on to this item, we'll break for 20 minutes. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 10:23 and Committee commenced at 10:46*

#### **Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

**Chairman** (Mr. Fred Pedersen): I call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following matters to deal with: Bills 1 and 2. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We wish to continue with the consideration of Bill 1, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2026-2027*, and the proposed 2026-2027 Main Estimates of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Are we in agreement we first deal with Bill 1?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Bill 1 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2026-2027 –  
Consideration in Committee**

**Chairman:** Thank you. I would like to ask Minister Hickeys: Do you have any officials you would like to appear the committee?

**Hon. George Hickeys:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the committee's indulgence, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. 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 Hickeys, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments.

**Hon. George Hickeys:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to join you today to present the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut's Main Estimates and Business Plan. Joining me here today are Deputy Minister Kyle Seeley and Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Mandy Hickey.

Mr. Chair, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure provides fundamental internal services across the government, including public procurement and logistics, capital planning, project delivery and management of federal funding agreements. Mr. Chairman, these services are critical to the effective work of other departments and support the Government's efforts to close Nunavut's infrastructure gap.

For the 2026-27 fiscal year, the Department's proposed operations and maintenance budget is \$281,109,000.

The Department delivers services through six different branches, and each branch supports critical elements of the Government of Nunavut's mandate and priorities.

Starting with the Directorate Branch, which includes the Office of the Deputy Minister and the Policy and Planning Division, this branch leads the development of departmental

policy and legislation, and it manages communications and access to information and privacy requests.

The proposed operating budget for the Directorate Branch is \$2,286,000. Mr. Chairman, this is a \$246,000 increase from 2025-26, can be attributed to the establishment of a new position dedicated to supporting the integration of artificial intelligence within the Government of Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the Corporate Services Branch delivers key internal services to government departments and to the branches of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. The branch is comprised of:

- Financial Services;
- Human Resources;
- Procurement and Logistics; and
- Federal Contributions and Relations.

The Corporate Services Branch's proposed 2026-27 operating budget is \$13,636,000, which is an increase of \$635,000 from 2025-26 fiscal year, driven by increases in salaries from the collective agreement and service contracts. Mr. Chairman and Members, this budget supports the department in maintaining effective strategic financial management, developing human resource initiatives, managing federal capital funding agreements, and providing government-wide procurement and logistics services.

Mr. Chair, the Department's Information Management and Information Technology Branch manages the Government of Nunavut's core network and communications services. It includes the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which supports client departments' hardware and software needs and helps maintain the security of the Government of Nunavut records and communications systems.

Mr. Chair, the Information Management and Information Technology Branch's proposed operations and maintenance budget for 2026-2027 is \$60,632,000. This net increase of \$5,999,000 – could have added another thousand to round it up – from 2025-2026 is driven primarily by additional software licensing costs and to support Qulliq Energy Corporation on the Government of Nunavut's network.

Mr. Chairman and Members, Infrastructure Branch, through government programs and services, depend on safe, reliable facilities and assets owned or leased by the Government of Nunavut.

The Infrastructure Branch provides a comprehensive suite of services to all Government of Nunavut departments that includes developing and overseeing technical standards, leading capital planning, managing projects, facilities and real property lease agreements.

The proposed 2026-27 Operations and Maintenance budget for the Infrastructure Branch is \$149,266,000. This is a net increase of \$11,479,000 from the fiscal 2025-26 year. This change is driven primarily by increased utilities and maintenance expenses to bring new building online, including the Nunavut Recovery Centre and the Kivalliq Long Term Care Facility.

Mr. Chairman, the Transportation Branch oversees the Government of Nunavut's transportation assets and infrastructure, including 24 community airports, the Iqaluit International Airport and a growing portfolio of ports, harbours and other marine facilities.

Mr. Chairman and Members, Nunavut's transportation infrastructure supports daily life in our communities and enables government programs and services across Nunavut.

Nunavut Airports operates and maintains 24 airports outside Iqaluit, ensuring facilities, staff and equipment meet or exceed regulatory requirements and federal standards.

The Transportation Branch's proposed operation and maintenance budget for 2026-27 is \$55,289,000. This is an increase of \$434,000 from the 2025-26 fiscal year. This is driven primarily by forced growth to support operations and maintenance of Nunavut Airports.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, the Petroleum Products Division purchases, stores, and distributes fuel to Nunavut residences, businesses, airlines, and governments. The Petroleum Products Division's purchase strategy balances advanced purchasing with in-year acquisitions to reliably and efficiently meet communities' fuel needs.

Stemming from favorable market conditions for the 2025 resupply, the Petroleum Products Division maintained fuel prices in 2025-26 fiscal year, and improved the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund from a deficit to a modest surplus.

In 2026-27, the division will manage bulk fuel purchases, plan and deliver the 2026 fuel resupply, and continue to assess long-term fuel-storage capacity needs in communities.

Mr. Chairman and Members, this concludes my opening remarks. I am proud to be the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. This department will continue to play an essential role in the Government of Nunavut's short- and long-term infrastructure and service plans. I look forward to our discussion, and I will be pleased to take any questions from the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Does the Chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

(interpretation ends) I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2026-2027 main estimates, and 2026-2030 Business Plan of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut.

The department's proposed 2026-2027 operations and maintenance budget is \$281,109,000. This represents a 7.1 per cent increase from the 2025-2026 fiscal year. (interpretation ends) The number of departmental positions remains unchanged at 404.

(interpretation) Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

(interpretation ends) On November 21, 2025, the Government of Canada announced the creation of the \$1 billion Arctic Infrastructure Fund. Its stated purpose is to "support dual-use-civilian and community and defence transportation projects that reinforce Canada's sovereignty, enable regional economic development, and connect northern and Indigenous communities."

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut's business plan indicates that two of its priorities for the 2026-2027 fiscal year are to "prepare a prioritized list of dual-use and housing-enabling infrastructure projects to inform engagement with federal partners and to begin quantifying infrastructure funding gaps across key infrastructure categories", and to "prepare an integrated funding proposal package for federal capital funding programs such as the Arctic Infrastructure Fund and an Airports Capital Assistance Program, to maximize investment in eligible dual-use assets in Nunavut." Members look forward to ongoing updates on the status of the department's applications for such projects as airport relocations and runway extensions.

The department's Infrastructure Branch includes a Municipal Works Division, which the department's business plan indicates "provides on-site in-community support of municipalities in the areas of regulatory compliance and operational support for the delivery of municipal water, and wastewater programs and services." In recent years, the government's annual capital estimates have included a number of "funding bundles" for the infrastructure related to water, wastewater and solid waste.

The *Government of Nunavut Drinking Water Strategic Framework* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on May 29, 2023. It indicated that "forthcoming regulatory changes in Nunavut are anticipated to reflect the Health Canada *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*... Most water treatment plants will need to be upgraded or replaced under the newly contemplated regulations." The Department of Health's business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "finalize the *Municipal Drinking Water Regulations*." Members encourage the

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to work closely with the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services on this issue.

The department's *Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy* was revised in February 2023, and sunsets on March 31, 2027. Schedule A of the policy details departmental support for "access roads and community marine infrastructure," while Schedule B details departmental support for "community marine infrastructure capital projects." Schedule B was formerly referred to as "small craft harbour contributions". The 2022-2023 annual report on the administration of the program was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 11, 2025. The 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 annual reports have not yet been tabled. Members look forward to the timely tabling of future annual reports.

On October 18, 2019, the Government of Nunavut issued a request for proposals for a Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study. The department's 2025-2026 Business Plan indicated that one of its priorities has been to "develop an implementation plan prioritizing projects and considering departmental resources and opportunities for increased federal support and participation in marine infrastructure development, based on the results of the Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study." The business plan also indicates that a "preliminary implementation plan has been developed." The standing committee continues to encourage the minister to table the final report from the Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study and the related implementation plan in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

The Petroleum Products Division's 2023-2024 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 15, 2025. The department's 2025-2026 Business Plan indicated that one of its priorities was to "complete review of management models for the Petroleum Products Division." Members look forward to receiving the results of this work.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 main estimates and 2026-2030 Business Plan of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Do members have any general questions before we proceed to detailed questions? Seeing none, we will now proceed to a page-by-page review of the 2026-2027 Main Estimates starting on page J-4. We'll now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Directorate Branch, total operations and maintenance, \$2,286,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Minister and your officials.

In your opening comments you mentioned a new position dedicated for the artificial intelligence. I would like to ask what role would that position play within the Department

of Transportation and Infrastructure, and what specific benefits it would bring to the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Qavvik. Mr. Hickers.

**Hon. George Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is always a fun division to talk to. There's so many acronyms that I can't use in the House, so it tends to stretch out the answer a little bit.

With regards to artificial intelligence, it's a burgeoning factor. It's an increasing level of focus that's needed to make sure that from a privacy standpoint, from an operational standpoint that there's some policies in place to make sure that we're utilizing that technology in an appropriate manner, even so far as the federal government has named an artificial intelligence minister, with Minister Solomon, who I met with earlier on in this role. With regards to the scope of work that that individual will be doing, they will be working with our information technology division. They will be working with privacy legislation to make sure that we're safely using artificial intelligence.

So as a growing concern I guess or a growing opportunity at the same time of utilizing artificial intelligence at the government level. I'm very much looking forward to seeing how the functionality of this role plays out, as well as supporting future pathways down from a number of different departments of utilizing artificial intelligence.

So to have that pivot point, I guess would be a good description, to make sure that we are following best practices, work with other jurisdictions and go forward from there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickers. Mr. Qavvik, go ahead.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. I would like to follow up how this role supports practical priorities such as airport safety, runway monitoring, and asset management in Nunavut communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Hickers.

**Hon. George Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the question. We're getting down into more the operational side of things. I think, through you, Mr. Chairman, I think Mr. Seeley would be best served to respond to that question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Go ahead Mr. Seeley.

**Mr. Seeley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This position has been, is being established with the Assembly's approval to make sure that we've got a good governance framework in place for the department and how we're utilizing artificial intelligence in the workplace to support delivery of our programs and services.

How it would impact transportation services specifically in Sanikiluaq or any other airport we don't yet know, but certainly there are a lot of efficiencies being realized through digital solutions and artificial intelligence, and they're developing very quickly.

Right now our priority is going to be to get the position in place, get the governance framework established, and then start taking individual solutions from different parts of the department, including airports. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Seeley. No more questions. Any other members with questions for the Directorate Branch? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Directorate Branch total operations and maintenance of \$2,286,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-5, and we will now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Corporate Services Branch. Total operations and maintenance, \$13,636,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Chair. Your department's 2026-2030 business plan indicates that two of its planned actions of the 2026-27 fiscal year are to prepare a prioritized list of dual-use and housing-enabling infrastructure projects to inform engagement with federal partners and to begin quantifying infrastructure funding gaps across key infrastructure categories; and to prepare an integrated funding proposal package for federal capital funding of programs, such as the Arctic Infrastructure Fund and Airports Capital Assistance Program to maximize investment in eligible dual-use assets in Nunavut. What specific projects have been identified to date? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana Mr. Hickers.

**Hon. George Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. I think as we go forward, and I know just as recently as last week Mr. Seeley and his counterparts across the Government of Nunavut have been meeting to identify a priority list on different projects, and that is still a work in progress to a certain degree.

But to date we're moving ahead with agreements on design of the Rankin Inlet, Resolute Bay, and Cambridge Bay runways, and moving ahead with other agreements on the Building Canada Fund. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any questions from members on Corporate Services Branch? Ms. Angootealuk? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Corporate Services Branch total operations and maintenance of \$13,636,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-7. We will now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Information Management and Information Technology Branch. Total operations and maintenance, \$60,632,000. Do members have any questions? Ms. Angootealuk, go ahead.

**Ms. Angootealuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My question today is: How many of the Information Management and Information Technology Branch 87 positions are currently vacant?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angootealuk. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Out of those positions, 38 are vacant. However, 20 of them are currently filled with casuals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angootealuk, any other questions? Go ahead.

**Ms. Angootealuk:** Your department's 2026-2027 main estimate indicate that the budget for Information and Communication Technology Program is increasing from 44.945 to 50.474 million. This represents an increase of 12.3 per cent. What accounts for this increase?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Angootealuk. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although it seems like a significant increase, there's only really basically three reasons behind that. One was the collective agreement that was signed with increased salary cost for that division, as well as increasing costs for software licensing. It seems to be an industry standard that software licensing seems to be getting more and more expensive.

In addition to that, taking on the responsibility of the information management and information technology of the Qulliq Energy Corporation also factors into that increase. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Next on my list is Mr. Taqtu? No. Since there are no other questions from members, do members agree with the Department of

Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Information Management and Information Technology Branch total operations and maintenance of \$60,632,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-8. We'll now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Infrastructure Branch total operations and maintenance, \$149,266,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Taqtu.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The *Government of Nunavut Drinking Water Strategic Framework* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on May 29, 2023. Your department's 2025-2026 Business Plan indicates that it continues working to advance the drinking water action plan based on the Drinking Water Strategic Framework developed in 2022-2023. What is your department's timeline for tabling the new drinking water action plan? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question. Basically right now the next steps are to start drafting the actual action plan, but in doing so, we want to make sure that we're engaging with internal stakeholders, other government departments and divisions, as well as external stakeholders like municipalities that are already in corporate impact. To make sure that those engagements occur, we are planning for that work to occur in the fiscal year 2026-2027, and we would then, we would need to finalize regulations to make that plan, that action plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any more, Mr. Taqtu? Go ahead.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Your 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "refine the capital planning and project prioritization process and use it to prepare the next capital submission package."

What specific changes to the process are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Chairman, as we take over, as we transition from the previous government, it is always, I'm not going to say a challenge; it's an opportunity to recognize projects that are in progress already, and to take a look at what our budget limitations are, as well as, like I mentioned, a prioritization of different capital projects.

As we've tabled our mandate, we work as a cabinet to identify different projects to promote moving forward. And like I had mentioned in a previous response, Mr. Seeley and his colleagues have met as recently as last week.

But with regards to specifics on the capital planning process, more of an operational, through you, Mr. Chairman, I'll get Mr. Seeley to supplement my response. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, minister. Go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

**Mr. Seeley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The responsibility for the GN's capital planning process is jointly currently between the Department of Finance and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut. The two departments have been working over the last year or so to review the existing process and opportunities to improve.

We have set up new engagement sessions at different levels of management with all departments.

We have established new intake processes to identify priority projects from each department, and that includes both standard capital projects as well as digital projects that might be considered under the capital process as well.

The outcome of those consultations with departments have been compiled, and our team is working to review how we can best prioritize for both the existing and the emerging needs of our departments to meet the needs of municipalities as well as the GN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Seeley. Minister Hickes, do you want to add on?

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to add a supplemental response to mine and Mr. Seeley's. I think it's important to note as we sit here going through these types of strategies and planning processes, within the capital planning process, we come to the table with critical infrastructure needs and wants.

When we're looking at building health centres, and water and sewer, and fuel storage capacity, power generation, those are critical components of the infrastructure that our communities need.

I'm not saying that community halls and arenas and other facilities are not important, but we also as a government, that's one of the challenges that we have to weigh very carefully is to make sure we're meeting the critical needs, the infrastructure needs of our communities, as well as doing our best to meet public expectation for other types of infrastructure being completed across the territory. I just wanted to add that in, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Taqtu, any more? Go ahead.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the detailed answer.

Your department's draft 2026-2027 Main Estimates indicate that the Infrastructure Branch's budget for service contract is increasing from \$50.160 million to \$57.664 million. This represents an increase of 12.7 per cent. What accounts for this increase? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a lot of those increases come from different utility increases and expenses. There are a couple other components that maybe, through you, Mr. Chairman, I'll get Ms. Hickey to outline some of the full forced growth or increases necessary, and hopefully get the support of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Go ahead, Ms. Hickey.

**Ms. Hickey:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question. We have two new buildings that are coming online, the Nunavut Recovery Centre and then Long-Term Care Centre in Rankin Inlet. So the service contracts will support as-and-when snow removal and different maintenance of those buildings, moving forward. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Hickey. Any other questions, Mr. Taqtu? No. Any other members with questions for Infrastructure Branch? Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To follow up on my member colleague from Quttiktuq, my apologies, on the question about refine the capital plan project, what specific improvements are being made to ensure projects are prioritized fairly and based on the greatest needs across Nunavut communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So when we look at currently, so like members have approved in the past, and as recently as earlier this year approved monies for the department to go into planning, do planning exercises before we actually have the capital budget appropriated for a specific project.

Through that prioritization list of the different projects that are in the pipeline that we would like to see move forward, we do some preliminary planning so that we get the

general scope, or a fairly loose class estimate on what the cost would be, as well as business cases that continue to be brought forward by departments through the capital planning process right now.

But as far as specific efficiencies or improvements to the capital planning process, through you Mr. Chairman, I'll ask Mr. Seeley to supplement a response. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, minister. Go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

**Mr. Seeley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regarding the prioritization of projects, each department is responsible for identifying its highest priority projects.

So within its program and service mandate, those projects are submitted through the intake process that I described earlier. They are then ranked based on things like community and individual safety regulatory requirement, and critical needs for communities.

In addition to that, we are looking at other considerations on when was the last time investment was made for programming assets within that community, that aren't necessarily safety-driven, to include some of those social responsibility to advance programming for structure, in addition to critical infrastructure.

The weighting of those two components, critical assets that the minister described, and program assets, is the improvement that we're seeking right now. We need to make sure that we've got a fair balance of advancing all of those infrastructure types.

So that's currently our work, and that work is being done very collaboratively with our client departments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Seeley. Any other members with questions for the Infrastructure Branch? Go ahead, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Infrastructure Branch is one of the highest appropriated within your department, and under the action item Business Plan 2026-2027, the third bullet, "finalize the Nunavut fibre connectivity road map for the West Hudson Fibre Link and Kivalliq-Baffin Connector projects," are you able to differentiate the cost associated for these two projects? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Qavvik. Minister Hickes, go ahead.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I had a question earlier this week on the different fibre projects, and I know one of the challenges that we've been

having is there's a few projects underway, and I know the member brought up two specific ones.

When we look at the Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Project was funded through Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission -- it's always a mouthful every time I say it -- with planning in the West Hudson Bay area, and then we look at the additional projects that we have on the go, as well as the Department of National Defence is talking about doing some projects.

I can't really give you much of a clearer answer than it is fluid at the moment. As we go forward, I know we do have allocations through the Universal Broadband Program, as well as through the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission network.

Through money that we've received with initial I guess cost estimates, the money that we've gotten wouldn't meet the needs to complete any of those projects, so we're continuing to explore different options, different partnership opportunities, potentially looking at increased funding or, like we talked about the other day, of changing the scope of what communities we're going into.

I'm sorry I can't give a real clear, definitive answer to the member's question, but like I said the other day, we are coming to a very distinct decision point where we've got to choose our path forward, and I do look forward to keeping the committee and members abreast of decisions that are made. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickers. Go ahead, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister, for your responses. What timeline has been established for completion and implementation of the fibre connectivity road map? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Qavvik. Go ahead, Minister Hickers.

**Hon. George Hickers:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it could take us into the next year. Again, like I said earlier, it's going to depend upon a lot of momentum behind some of the other decisions and potential other projects and partners. So we're looking at having that road map kind of finalized within the next year so that we know our path forward. Hopefully we can make some specific project decisions prior to that, if we get the support behind it.

But this -- how would I put it? -- we want to make sure that we're making these decisions with all the information available to us. These are significant capital and infrastructure costs, and the impact on Nunavut is obviously very, very important as well.

So we want to make sure that we're doing it right with the best information that we have available to us so that we can make sure that these projects move forward in a way that's going to benefit as many Nunavummiut as possible. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Go ahead, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How is the department coordinating with federal partners and stakeholders or private sectors to secure funding and move these projects forward? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Hickes?

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And maybe I wasn't really clear in my last response. There's a lot of feet under the table on these discussions. There's a lot of different federal departments, even internal within the Government of Nunavut.

We want to make sure that we're recognizing the paths forward. But when it comes to the funding component, again, that's a very fluid point that we're at right now. We need to make sure we make our decisions on what projects are most feasible, to have the maximum impact on Nunavut for reasonable expenses, as well as to look at different funding partners to make sure that we're maximizing the investment side of things and minimizing the cost on Nunavummiut, from our own budget, I guess, responsibilities.

But also to inform that there's a meeting with fibre stakeholders this upcoming spring, so we do look at narrowing our focus a little bit more and being able as a cabinet and as a government to move forward on what projects that we can implement as quick as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Next on my list I have Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for the response.

(interpretation ends) On the capital needs for the airports across Nunavut, in the 2014 capital needs assessment, both Kimmirut airport and Pangnirtung airport were identified as candidates for relocation, and there has been studies after that 2014. Maybe just give an update on that assessment. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not joking, I guess, but I was talking with one of my colleagues earlier, and we were talking, the member from Sanikiluaq brought up the runway location in his community.

I know yourself, Mr. Mike, have brought up the relocation of the Pangnirtung airport, and I was saying that it's a good thing the speaker is not a regular member, otherwise I would be adding Kimmirut to the list as well. So you have had the opportunity to raise that as a previous identified relocation project to potentially implement.

Mr. Speaker, and I know I've talked to Mr. Mike in this House on previous questions. With our competing demands still have a number of airport terminals and airport runways that need either resurfacing or potentially extending.

Terminals need updating. I don't want to say it will never happen, because I think that would be unfair, to recognize that there is a need to relocate some of these facilities or runways. That being said, we need to make sure that we're meeting the minimum standards in all of our communities before we can look at taking on such a significant project as an airport or runway relocation. The cost would be quite incredible. It would probably take up one or even two years of our entire capital budget to move one airport.

So it is in the back of our minds; unfortunately, I can't say it's front and centre, because we do have competing priorities right now that we have to deal with, with today's infrastructure needs. And I do hope that future governments will have an opportunity to revisit this topic. But at this point, there is nothing in our capital planning process on the books to proceed with the projects that the member named. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mike, go ahead.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that nothing is cheap. Even those very important or major projects, it's not possible to get some major projects happening. We're trying to agree to \$3.7 billion for the funding of operation and maintenance in total.

The Pangnirtung airstrip is too short. The airline maximizes the freight. Pangnirtung, when the freight comes, the groceries or the store-bought goods are more expensive than other communities because the airstrip is too short.

This issue is not a new issue, Mr. Chairman. I just want to reiterate that since (interpretation ends) 2014 to 2017, MMN Group Limited completed several projects in support of the development of a new airport in Pangnirtung. The airport relocation, (interpretation) in regards to this issue, for the Pangnirtung, it would improve for the community of Pangnirtung if the airstrip is relocated and if there was a road constructed to the top of the mountains to the Pangnirtung area. It would be very beneficial to all.

But in regards to the study that was done back then, when there was an assessment or study at the time, it's evident that the community of Pangnirtung residents face risks, because of safety issues, because the airstrip is right in the middle of the community

itself. Sometime in the future an unfortunate issue might occur, as it's a risk, with the airstrip being right in the middle of the community.

There studies previously, I don't know where the studies report went, but I understood the minister, when he stated that there are other communities that require airport infrastructure, that's why the Pangnirtung community's airstrip is not in consideration of relocating, for Pangnirtung and Kimmirut, as they're not, with regards to competing issues or competing projects for infrastructure with the needs of the community.

I was wondering if you can provide information, written information to the us, and table the reasons why you cannot relocate the airstrips for Pangnirtung and Kimmirut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Go ahead, Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I do know that back in 2014, as the member stated, there was a study, but I'm not familiar with the report that the member was talking about. I wouldn't mind if the member could share that with me. But absolutely, Mr. Chairman, I can provide correspondence to the member on the current status of the runway relocation.

I just want to highlight that we do recognize, and obviously the member brought up the safety component, and one of the projects that we have in this year's budget is a runway resurfacing in Pangnirtung. We do acknowledge that it has limitations, but we're doing everything that we can to maintain the safety of that runway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Go ahead, Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The questions I raised here that derive from the *Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update, 2020-2040* that I looked at, that I outlined. It's in the government documents.

This should be given serious consideration before it's too late, because the airport is in, is between a community, and in the study at the 1,000 metre height, there is a flat area that only requires a road going up. And with the climate change, it would be good timing, because more and more people are having to trek over land because of receding ice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comment is noted, thank you.

**Chairman:** Any other questions for members on the Infrastructure Branch? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Infrastructure Branch, total operations and maintenance of \$149,266,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-9. We will now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Transportation Branch's total operations and maintenance of \$55,289,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On October 18, 2019, the Government of Nunavut issued a request for proposals for comprehensive marine infrastructure scoping study.

Your department's 2025-2026 Business Plan indicated that one of its priorities has been to develop an implementation plan prioritizing projects and considering departmental resources and opportunities for increased federal support and participation in marine infrastructure development, based on the results of the Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study. The business plan also indicates that a preliminary implementation plan has been developed.

When will the final report from the Comprehensive Marine Infrastructure Scoping Study and the related implementation plan be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As of right now, Mr. Chairman, we don't have a plan to table that report. It's almost 800 pages of very technical information that would be very, I'm going to say very expensive, very labour-intensive to complete all the translations on it.

I don't have an issue with making the report public, so I'll have a discussion with my officials on how and by what method we can do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any other questions? Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for 2026-2027 fiscal year is to complete a territory-wide transportation corridor needs assessment, and identify projects for introduction to the capital plan.

How will this work different from the government's previous reports on airport and marine infrastructure? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We understand from whenever we're looking at prioritization, it does not change, I guess. It would depend upon some of the focuses of, in our case, we've got a new mandate now, how it differs from previous mandates or priorities. That's where we sit down, as Mr. Seeley mentioned earlier, on the process to identify capital plans that we want to move forward. But I think one of the changes that I've been talking to my colleagues about is identifying and highlighting the differentiation between critical infrastructure and want infrastructure.

When we're looking at airport and marine, most of those are critical infrastructure, regarding safety of our hunters and protecting our communities. That is all I can answer at this moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister, for your response.

Your department's 2022-2023 annual report on the administration of the Community Transportation Initiatives Program was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 11, 2025.

When will the 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 annual reports be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for raising this. Although it's not a statutorily obligated tabling, I do intend to table the 2023-2024 annual report this upcoming fall. We are still receiving information from municipalities to be able to get all of the information together to do the subsequent annual reports, but it is something that we are working on, and I'm looking forward to tabling. I know we will still be a couple of years behind, but I'm looking at tabling the next one this fall. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To Mr. Hickes, regarding the work in Pangnirtung, it was mentioned that Pangnirtung, the report will be seeing some adjustments. Or in the plans, can you further clarify with Pangnirtung hamlet that also do

some work in the area, that monies that were identified for the project, how exactly will it be used to make renovations or adjustments on the port in Pangnirtung, is my question. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not familiar with the project that the member is talking about. It might be a hamlet-led initiative. I'm sure I can get Mr. Seeley to talk to his counterpart at Community Services and get an update, and I can respond to the member with more clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Go ahead, Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for saying that you'll be looking into it. With the DFO and other ministers that work in the area indicated that Pangnirtung will receive funding for improvements, but you were not aware of this, this is part of the minister's task. Perhaps he can delegate his, to further or be more abreast with the capital projects that the federal government funds.

The port in Pangnirtung really needs some improvements, and the government needs to know where the improvements must be made. Since it was opened, it's totally different now today, compared to then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the member's comments. When we look at, especially when there's federal funding involved, we will have to follow up with Fisheries and Oceans to see exactly what that plan is.

I'm sure my officials who are sitting beside me are listening very diligently, as well as Minister Simailak's staff, along with Minister Koonoo's staff as well too, from the environmental standpoint.

But I can assure the member and all members that when we look at different federal funding pots, we want to make sure that we're maximizing the health and safety of our communities, which is obviously the first priority.

So I did and I continue to commit to the member that I will look into this further, and provide correspondence related to the member. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any other questions for the Transportation Branch for members? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of

Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Transportation Branch, total operations and maintenance of \$55,289,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-10. We'll now review the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Petroleum Products Division. Do members have any questions? Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I have concerns this year's petroleum products price won't increase that the minister previously identified. Is that the case yet today, that we won't see an increase in either gas or diesel from the information we have today? Can you further confirm that that is the case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you. I appreciate the question because I know the fuel price and oil pricing volatility across the world right now.

I have to commend my team within the Petroleum Products Divisions. They have made some very strategic purchases over the past year, even through some of the volatility. We're hoping to minimize any impact. If there are any changes, they would be very moderate, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): When are you going make an announcement if there should be an increase in the petroleum products? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Go ahead, Minister Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did anticipate that question. I was going to have to supplement my previous response. Basically from the fuel purchasing that we've completed already, there's a very small probably top-up at the end of the year needed to be done, and once we calculate the transportation cost, we'll have a clearer picture of the final cost. As members know, this is not an appropriated amount; it's on a cost-recovery basis through our revolving fund.

Typically we come out with the pricing in October. I don't see any reason that would change this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Any other members with questions for Petroleum Products Division? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut Petroleum Products Division?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page J-3. Do members agree with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut 2026-2027 Main Estimates, total operations and maintenance of \$281,109,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Any closing comments, Mr. Hickes?

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members. I'll recognize the clock and realize that I'll keep my comments very short.

I just want to thank the members for their questions. I know it's somewhat daunting to have such a broad portfolio. There's a lot of different topics to cover on in there, and I did allude to the Petroleum Products Division and the great work that they do, but I also would like to extend that appreciation not just to my colleagues that are sitting here beside me, but the staff behind them.

I can appreciate more than most through my service through the civil service, many years ago, now how much work goes into preparing for a session. Work gets put into defending a budget as complicated as having all the infrastructure and petroleum and IMIT and procurement. There is an incredible amount of work, and we have a great team behind Kyle and Mandy that are supporting us here today. I just wanted to acknowledge them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>>*Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Hickes. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials.

What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you. There's a motion on the floor which is non-debatable. Those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

>>*Committee adjourned at 11:58 and House resumed at 11:59*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Going to the *Orders of the Day*. Item 21, Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Pedersen.

### **Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1, and I would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): There's a motion on the floor. Seconder? Mr. Attagutluk. To the motion, all in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Item, 22, Third Reading of Bills. Item 23, *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

### **Item 23: Orders of the Day**

**Mr. Clerk** (interpretation): Just a reminder there is a meeting of the regular members' caucus at 1:30 in the Nanuq boardroom this afternoon.

(interpretation) For June 1:

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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions

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

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Monday, June 1 at 1:30 p.m. Have a good weekend, colleagues, and people of Nunavut. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 12:02*

